The MORALITY *and* OBLIGATION *of Public Religious Vows, or Covenants, illuſtrated.*

4479.aaa.26

A

SERMON,

PREACHED

At POLLOCKSHAWS, on a Day of *Public Faſting*, 4th Nov. 1779. From DEUT. xxix. 24, 25.

TOGETHER WITH

ANIMADVERSIONS on the Rev. Mr. PATRICK HUTCHISON's Attacks on the *Seceſſion* in general, and *Covenanting* in particular.

BY

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Miniſter of the Goſpel in POLLOCKSHAWS.

GLASGOW:

Printed by WILLIAM SMITH, for the AUTHOR.

Sold by W. SMITH, Glaſgow; W. GRAY and R. INGLIS, Edinburgh; W. ANDERSON, Stirling; P. MAIR, Falkirk.

MDCCLXXX.

BRITISH MUSEUM

PREFACE.

ALL the apology I ſhall make for preſenting the following performance to the public, is a very ſhort account how I was led into the diſagreeable field of controverſy. After the Rev. Mr. H——n's firſt performance was publiſhed, his connections in this corner, though not numerous, ſoon become very noiſy, eſpecially with reſpect to covenanting; to that degree, that ſome even of the moſt pacific of my people ſuggeſted to me, that it would not be unſeaſonable to ſay ſomething concerning it in public. If it is a watchman's duty to give the ſignal of approaching danger, it is plain, that it was not very eaſy to give ſolid reaſons for refuſing. To their warm ſolicitations, I replied, That I would not chuſe to enter on ſuch a controverſy, without inſiſting on it at ſome length; and, that I had much more freedom to ſpend, in that manner, ſome part of a day appointed for confeſſing and mourning over the provocations of the times, with reſpect to principles, as well as the other ſins of our heart and life, than to do ſo on a Sabbath: And as a ſynodical faſt was nigh, I ſhould think of it againſt that time.

Accordingly the ſermon was delivered in the forenoon; and immediately after, many who have a juſt claim upon me to inſtruct them, by every habile method, were as urgent for its being publiſhed; to which requiſition, I, perhaps, too haſtily conſented.

Every miniſter, however, is certainly at liberty to defend his own principles, either from the pulpit, or preſs, as he apprehends will be moſt for edification in general; and, for the benefit of theſe of whom he has the charge in particular. Nay, it is certainly his indiſpenſible duty, if he is convinced that his principles are ſcriptural; and, if he is not convinced of this, he ought candidly to renounce them.

Having conſented to publiſh the ſermon, it ſeemed very neceſſary, to make ſome obſervations on the reſt of Mr. H——n's charges againſt our principles, (or at leaſt, what he repreſents as ſuch), as well as his attack on covenanting. On this account the performance has ſwelled to the bulk in which it now appears; being one half larger than I intended, although I took every method I could think of, to abbreviate in tranſcribing from my notes. It was in this manner, from a ſenſe of duty, and a deſire to reſtrain *ſome, at leaſt*, in the generation, from ſhaking themſelves looſe of every thing like an attachment to Preſbyterian principles; and not from any pleaſure in wrangling, that I was led into the rugged paths of controverſy.

Theſe who heard me, will remember, that the ſermon was delivered in two diſcourſes in the forenoon; but, as more time than uſual is ordinarily ſpent in prefacing, prayer, and praiſe on days of faſting; I had little more time than for one diſcourſe, and, therefore, ſaw no occaſion to divide it in publiſhing. Beſides, as I had not the remoteſt view of publiſhing at that time, I introduced ſeveral other branches of the controverſy, which are now poſtponed to the Animadverſions, in order to avoid repetition; whereby one third of what was delivered

in public is omitted in the ſermon. It is true, I have made ſome additions; but much ſhort of what is reſerved to its proper place. There is nothing, however, which I delivered in public, as far as my notes and memory ſerve me; but, the reader will find it either in the ſermon, or animadverſions; and may judge for himſelf, if one half of it is falſhood, which I was informed was the verdict of one hearer; and well it was not worſe.

It is probable, the reader will not expect very much elegance at my hand. It is certainly one principal deſign of publications, to communicate our ſentiments to our fellow-creatures, when it is either impracticable, or at leaſt, very difficult to do it as extenſively, as is requiſite in any other manner. I hope the manner is ſuch, that the ſentiment may be very eaſily underſtood. Beſides, the angry brow of a furiouſly agitated controverſy, like a mathematical demonſtration, (although for different reaſons, perhaps,) will not frequently admit of very much elegance in compoſition.

Such as have never ſeen Mr. H——n's publications, will perhaps conſider many things in mine, as by far too harſh and ſevere. I readily acknowledge it; but the abuſive manner in which my opponent has wrote, rendered it almoſt impoſſible to avoid it. Had his unparelelled abuſe been unconnected with his charges againſt Seceſſion principles, I ſhould willingly have paſt over it in ſilence: But as his rudeſt ſeverity is generally interwoven with ſome pretended charge againſt us, I could not avoid taking notice of it. If the reader conſult the publications on which I animadvert, he will find, that the harſheſt things I have ſaid are generally in the

way of retorting the charge, or endeavouring to ſhow my opponent, that the ſin with which he charges us, lies at his own door.

There is one particular, on which my opponent frequently pours out an irreſiſtible torrent of abuſe, namely, our maintaining covenanting to be a *moral duty;* but habitually neglecting the *performance* of it. And likewiſe our diſtinguiſhing between a *ſtated* and an *occaſional* duty. I could not well have refrained from anſwering him more in his own dialect, on this point, had I not entertained a ſuſpicion, that our brethren, who differ from us, might apprehend, that it was not Mr. H——n, but them I had in my eye. He informs us, that his neighbouring clergyman offered us an apology for our not covenanting, '*That it was the very ſame thing to acknowledge the* '*obligation of covenanting, as actually to perform the* '*duty.*' All his ſtories are genuine, and can be ſufficiently authenticated; I cannot however believe a ſingle word of this one. I do not mean, that ſuch a ſtory was not told him; I hope, he would not knowingly publiſh a falſhood, although, in the ſuperabundance of his decency and decorum, he is very liberal in charging others with the odious crime, who abhore it as much as himſelf. His neighbour might very juſtly aſſert, that in our preſent ſituation, maintaining covenant obligation is a duty called for at our hand; but, that actual covenanting is not.

But, that maintaining the obligation, was the ſame thing with actual performance of the duty, I am confident he never would aſſert, nor had he the leaſt occaſion ſo to do; and, therefore, I muſt queſtion either the intellectuals, or the veracity of

Mr. H——n's informers. Being well ſatisfied, however, that his neighbour had aſſerted, that *acknowledging* the obligation of covenanting was the ſame thing with the *actual performance* of the duty, he anſwers, p. 156. of his *Diſſertation*, 'His hearers, 'however, may avail themſelves of this doctrine; and 'when he demands his annual ſalary, they may tell him, 'that they acknowledge the obligation to pay, and inſiſt, 'that this is the ſame thing as actual payment, without 'giving him a ſingle farthing. I ſuppoſe this improve-'ment of his doctrine, would convince the reverend Gen-'tleman, that his doctrine was hereſy, &c.'

Since it is the payment of annual ſalaries, which is the effectual mean of conviction; whether *hearſays* are *orthodox* or *heretical;* it is a very eaſy matter, on this particular, to pay back my opponent in his own coin. He endeavours, in the ſame page, to diſprove the diſtinction between an *occaſional* and *ſtated* duty. 'With reſpect, therefore, to the actual 'performance of moral duties, all of them may, in ſome 'ſenſe, be ſaid to be occaſional.' Well, his hearers may avail themſelves of this doctrine; and when he demands his annual ſalary, they may tell him, that the actual performance of every moral duty is *occaſional*, no *ſtated* time fixed for the diſcharge of it, and of conſequence, that there can be no *fixed ſtated* time for demanding his annual ſalary, ſince it is only *occaſional* like other moral duties; and, that he has no right to demand it at a ſtated time, ſince the performance of every duty is occaſional, and ſo may refuſe to give him a ſingle farthing at the ſtated ſeaſon. This, I apprehend, would convince the reverend gentleman to purpoſe, that the payment of the annual ſalary is, *in ſome ſenſe*, not an *occaſion-*

al, but a *ſtated* duty, a ſtated time fixed for the performance of it: And would probably excite him to uſe all the rhetoric he is maſter of, to convince his hearers, that it is not an *occaſional* duty, the ſeaſon of it depending upon occurrences in providence, but, that there is a certain *annual* period agreed upon, for the *ſtated* performance of it. Unleſs he ſhould conſider it as more eligible to prove an *occaſional ſtated* duty, or a *ſquare circle*.—As this abuſe of his neighbour eſcaped me in its proper place, I thought it not amiſs to mention it here, and ſhew him, how eaſily his commentaries on hearſays, may be turned againſt himſelf.

I have no doubt, but Mr. H——n will find what will amount, in his view, to a double decade of falſhoods, and miſrepreſentations in this performance. Perhaps, very few will pretend to write on ſuch a multiplicity of different topics, without any miſtakes at all. I can only ſay, that I have not knowingly aſſerted any thing which is not matter of fact; nor deſignedly miſrepreſented my opponent, or the tenets which he maintains. Although, it is true, that ſome of my Brethren ſaw my manuſcript, none of them will pretend to adopt, or defend every ſentiment I have advanced; nor do I pretend to write for the Synod. And, therefore, if Mr. H——n conſider this performance as deſerving any reply, I expect he will remember, that it is the Author, and not his Brethren, he has to anſwer. And, if any thing appear to deſerve the treatment which he has given to others, that he will remember, that it is I, and not my Brethren, to whom the drubbing is due. And, I hope, to bear it patiently, perhaps with a ſilent reply, which cannot be indiſcreet.

He informs us, that he will not be ſo averſe to enter the field of controverſy again. I own it has not been ſuch a pleaſant exerciſe to me: I can eaſily find, that it diverts me from the other branches of my office-work; and therefore, I am certain, I will never enter it again with as little averſion. And, if a ſenſe of duty had not prevailed, I had no doubt ſtopt at the very firſt opening of theſe ſcenes, at which he has ſo little averſion. I expect to have no occaſion to engage in this controverſy again; becauſe, if it is neceſſary, I hope ſome of my Brethren, a number of whom, I am certain, can do it with much greater eaſe, and to far better purpoſe, will ſee it their duty to undertake it.

Quotations from Relief publications are numerous, and ſometimes conſiderably large, as I was deſirous the reader might ſee with his own eyes: I have likewiſe deſired the Printer to uſe not only the quotation mark, but *Italic character* alſo, that none may miſtake. And however numerous Mr. H——n's charges and arguments are, I have omitted none of them; and, that his ſentiments and mine may be ſeen at once, on any branch of the controverſy; I have thrown the Animadverſions into different Sections, with an Index, ſhowing what branch of the controverſy each Section contains. He complains grievouſly, of having only aſſertion without argument to anſwer; I hope, I have given no occaſion for ſuch a complaint: and, I deſire the reader to lay prejudice aſide, and compare Mr. H——n's arguments and mine, and try them by the unerring rule; I demand no more: And, I am certain, it is the likely method to draw a juſt concluſion.

My opponent boaſts very much of what he has done, and that his publications will carry all before them. To be very plain, I have no apprehenſion, that his will do ſo; nor expectation, that mine will. It is very probable, that the influence of both will be, in a great meaſure, confined to our reſpective connections; or a few corners, perhaps, where a violent intruſion takes place. The greater part of the generation, if they give themſelves the trouble to conſult either his publications, or mine; will very likely do ſo, merely as a piece of entertainment, and approve, or diſapprove, according as they favour either ſide, rather as an amuſement, than any thing elſe. Neither the Seceſſion, nor Relief, have much reaſon to exalt themſelves ſo very high in the eſtimate of the preſent age. And, however this be, I may ſay of ſuch boaſting, as the apoſtle does in another caſe, *Your glorying is not good.*

It is already evident, that the ſucceſs of Mr. H——n's publications, does not, in many places at leaſt, correſpond with his confident expectations; and it is very probable mine will come as far ſhort of my wiſhes. I have the ſatisfaction, however, of having attempted, what I am convinced was my duty.

With reſpect to the Relief ſcheme of principles, I deſire the reader to conſult Mr. H——n's *Diſſertation*, from the bottom of page 164, to the middle of the ſubſequent page, and ſubſtitute, *Relief and its votaries*, in place of *Seceſſion and its votaries;* and he will find the Relief principles deſcribed in a much more accurate, and nervous manner, than I can have any pretenſions unto. The ſubſtance of it is this, it looks fair at a diſtance, but when narrowly

ſearched into, it loſes its beauty, and dwindles into nothing. And would its votaries examine it properly, they could not fail to be convinced, that it is as deſtitute of a ſcriptural foundation, as any erroneous ſyſtem of principles now in the world. Its only ſafety, conſiſts in its being *implicitly* believed, by its *blinded* votaries. But this is only mangling; let the reader make the propoſed alteration, and he will find the Relief principles deſcribed in a very maſterly manner, in the paſſage referred unto. I have ſometimes heard it argued, that men could deſcribe and reprove to far better purpoſe, the ſins they had been guilty of themſelves. The application is eaſy; only repentance was perhaps ſuppoſed; of which there is very little appearance in the preſent caſe.

If my performance ſhall be the mean of giving any a more diſtinct view of the doctrines of free grace, of convincing ſome and eſtabliſhing others in the preſent truth, and enabling them to diſtinguiſh between *Chriſtian liberty* and *unſcriptural looſneſs*, between *anarchy* and *order* in the houſe of God, and in this manner be of any ſervice for promoting the intereſts of real godlineſs, I ſhall think my labour well beſtowed; if it ſhould be loſt labour, I have the ſatisfaction, that it is well deſigned.

D. W.

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The MORALITY, OBLIGATION, and SEASONS of *Covenanting* illuſtrated.

A

SERMON,

ON

DEUT. xxix. 24, 25.

Even all the nations ſhall ſay, Wherefore hath the Lord done thus unto this land? What meaneth the heat of this great anger? Then men ſhall ſay, Becauſe they have forſaken the covenant of the Lord God of their fathers, which he made with them when he brought them forth out of the land of Egypt.

IN the preceding context, we have the Jewiſh lawgiver at the head of the choſen tribes, the captains, elders, and officers, with all the men of Iſrael, their wives and little ones, entering into a ſolemn covenant, to ſerve the Lord God of their fathers: and, as the mouth of Jehovah unto that people, he ſets before them, in a very alarming point of view, what would undoubtedly be the conſequence of dealing perfidiouſly in the covenant of their God; that the anger of the Lord would ſmoke againſt that man, or againſt the whole nation, ſhould they involve themſelves in the aggravated iniquity, of violating the covenant of the Lord: That he would pour out his wrathful indignation on them, in ſuch a dreadful manner, that even the heathen nations around them ſhould ſay, as in the words of our text, *What meaneth the heat of this great anger?* And that men ſhould anſwer, *Becauſe they had* FORSAKEN *the covenant of the Lord God of their fathers*, &c. A very expreſs declaration; *That breach of covenant with God, is a very heinous ſin, which he will not ſuffer to paſs unpuniſhed.*

In diſcourſing further from theſe words, I ſhall endeavour, through divine aſſiſtance,

I. To evince the LAWFULNESS of *public vows*, or *covenants*, under the goſpel diſpenſation.

II. The OBLIGATION of ſuch vows or covenants on *poſterity*.

III. Conſider, if this is a DUTY, which God in his adorable providence, calls us to practiſe in our *preſent circumſtances*.

IV. Endeavour to ſhew, that BREACH of covenant with God, muſt be a very *aggravated ſin*.

After which, I ſhall conclude the whole, with ſome practical improvement.

I am in no heſitation concerning the ſuitableneſs of the ſubject to the occaſion, when an holy and righteous God is evidently pleading a controverſy with us; and when there is reaſon to fear, that our perfidy in the covenant of the God of our fathers, is not the leaſt aggravated of our offences. There is ſome ground however to ſuſpect, that we may not ſpeak, and hear, in a manner ſuitable unto the exerciſe of humiliation, in which we profeſs to be engaged; that we will be too apt to conſider it as a matter of mere curioſity, or ſpeculation. I ſhall therefore ſtudy brevity, that I may inſiſt on a different ſubject, in the after part of the day. I proceed then,

I. To evince the LAWFULNESS of *public vows*, or *covenants*, under the New-Teſtament diſpenſation. On this it ſhall ſuffice to ſhew, that public vows, or covenants, are *moral duties*; a branch of that obedience which God requires of us, in his moral law. The proof of this, I apprehend, will be a ſatisfactory deciſion of this controverſy: for, if covenanting is a moral duty, the obligation to it muſt be perpetual. The moral law of God, which is a tranſcript of his own glorious perfections, does not vary with the fluctuating taſte of the times; but is like himſelf immutable, and its obligation perpetual. Independents have frequently aſſerted, that all the public covenanting which we read of in ſcripture, was entirely ceremonial, and peculiar to that diſpenſation; that it evaniſhed, like other ſhadows when the ſubſtance appeared; and that we have no concern with it, under the goſpel-diſpenſation. There are likewiſe ſome

who profeſs to be preſbyterians, who have commenced their ſcholars, tread in their footſteps, and outrun their teachers, by aſſerting, in the ſtrongeſt terms, that our covenants, in theſe lands, are the very worſt branch of Popery. But, if it can be made evident, that covenanting is a moral duty, ſuch aſſertions will have no great weight, except with theſe who are ſtrongly inclined to believe every thing is true, which they fondly wiſh to be ſo.

It will therefore be neceſſary, to turn our thoughts, for a little, to the Jewiſh diſpenſation, and the regulations which were delivered by Jehovah unto that people, to be obſerved by them. And here a *ceremonial*, a *judicial*, and *moral* law, at once preſent themſelves to our view.—A *ceremonial* law, conſiſting of various rites, waſhings, and bloody ſacrifices; which conſtituted a conſiderable part of their religious ſervices, during that diſpenſation.—A *judicial* law, conſiſting of a variety of ſtatutes, and directions, for regulating their civil affairs as a nation.—A *moral* law, comprehending all the duties we owe unto God, to ourſelves, and to one another, as men, and as Chriſtians, of perpetual, inviolable obligation.——Our preſent enquiry then is, in which of theſe laws was their public covenanting included? Or, to which of theſe laws was it a branch of obedience? If it was included in, or a branch of obedience unto the moral law, its obligation muſt be perpetual, when God in his providence calls for ſuch a duty. I ſhall notice,

Firſt, That vows and oaths are a *moral duty*, a part of God's worſhip, inſtituted by himſelf, founded on the firſt commandment of the moral law; and on the third command, as expreſſive of the reverent manner in which they ought to be performed. Whatever may be urged againſt public vows or covenants, it will not be denied, that an *oath*, or the *act of ſwearing*, abſtract from any thing ſinful in the matter, or manner of it, is a moral duty; at leaſt by theſe who maintain, that every thing poſitive under the Old Teſtament, is abrogated under the New. Neceſſary oaths were both enjoined and practiſed under the Old Teſtament, and are not abrogated under the New Teſtament; and therefore, agreeable to their own reaſoning, oaths are not a poſitive, but a moral duty.

Secondly, If theſe covenants among the Jews were *ceremonial*, they behoved to *typify* ſomething or other concerning Chriſt to come in the fleſh, and ſalvation by him. It was the principal, and chief deſign of the whole body of theſe ceremonies, in this manner to exhibit to the Old-Teſtament church, the coming of the bleſſed SHILOH, and ſalvation through his all-perfect obedience and ſacrifice. This, I apprehend, may be taken for granted, until ſome other deſign of them, worthy of God, and revealed in his word, is made evident. The apoſtle once and again, in his epiſtle to the Hebrews, ſtiles them a *figure* for the time preſent, a *ſhadow* of good things to come; and Chriſt offering up himſelf a *ſacrifice*, as the ſubſtance of what was thus prefigured. It was the great deſign of them, that, (the bleſſing accompanying them, as an ordinance of heaven) they might be helpful unto the faith of the Old-Teſtament ſaints, in looking forward unto the coming of the promiſed MESSIAH, as the great ordinance of heaven to ſave guilty men. In every ceremony, there was an *external ſign*, and ſome *ſpiritual bleſſing* thereby ſignified. Bloody ſacrifices were a ſign; the blood of Chriſt, as the great atonement, was the ſpiritual bleſſing thereby ſhadowed forth. Divers waſhings were a ſign; the blood and Spirit of Chriſt to begin, and promote moral purity, or real goſpel holineſs, was the ſpiritual bleſſing prefigured. It is the ſaying of the apoſtle, *To* HIM *gave all the prophets witneſs:* ſo may it be ſaid, that it was the deſign of all theſe ceremonies, to lead the faith of the Old-Teſtament worſhippers unto HIM, as the *Lord their righteouſneſs and ſtrength.*

Now, if theſe covenants were ceremonial, what did they typify concerning Chriſt to come in the fleſh, and ſalvation through him? What was the external ſign, and what the ſpiritual bleſſing prefigured? Why, public vows, or covenants, are ſpiritual acts of religious worſhip; there is no external ſign, and without this, there can be no ceremony. It is very evident the Jewiſh covenants were a public engagement, to obſerve every ordinance which God either had already, or ſhould afterward inſtitute; and to practiſe every duty enjoined by him. But what this could poſſibly be typical of, I cannot tell. And as this is the uſual declamation of adverſaries to our covenants, an *antiquated ceremony*, a *beggarly element*, a *carnal ordinance;*

I ſhall only deſire you to conſider deliberately, if you can really ſay, what they were typical of, or prefigured; and if you cannot, I expect you will not be too raſh in crediting unſupported aſſertions.

Thirdly, If theſe vows, or covenants, were *judicial*, they behoved to regulate ſome branch or other of the *adminiſtration* of civil affairs among the Jews, as this was the profeſſed deſign of the judicial law. But what branch of civil affairs, among the Jews, was regulated by theſe covenants? None, that I know of. The Jews were certainly to conduct the adminiſtration of their civil affairs, as a nation, by the judicial ſtatutes delivered to them expreſly for this end, by Moſes the man of God. Their covenants were a public engagement to obey the whole of God's revealed will. Now, it is very obvious to me, at leaſt, that the ſtatutes and directions given them by Moſes, for regulating their civil matters, and for a public engagement to obey the whole of Jehovah's revealed will, behoved, in the very nature of things, to be quite diſtinct from one another. Our godly anceſtors have ſometimes been blamed, for ſubſtituting their covenants in the place of their Bibles; a charge which I have never yet ſeen ſupported, except by bare aſſertion, and our covenants are nothing the worſe in themſelves, although they had been abuſed: but if the Jews did manage any branch of civil matters by their covenants, they did undoubtedly ſubſtitute them, in the place of the ſtatutes which God had given them by Moſes, for that purpoſe. And if their covenants were not deſigned for managing civil matters, of which there is not the remoteſt evidence, they could not be judicial.

I may likewiſe notice, that, although I mean not to be poſitive, it appears to me very probable, that the whole of the judicial law may be conſidered as included, either in the ceremonial, or moral law: and that theſe particulars of the judicial, which cannot very well be conſidered as included in the moral law, were partly ceremonial, as well as judicial. That a man ſhould marry his brother's widow, was in part judicial, as it ſerved, in ſome particulars, to regulate ſucceſſion to the inheritance of their fathers; and cannot well be conſidered as included in the moral law: but it was likewiſe in part ceremonial, and typical of our great KINSMAN REDEEMER, marrying our widowed nature, and redeeming the mortgaged inheritance. The

like may be ſaid of other particulars. In this view, if their covenants were not ceremonial, they behoved to be moral. But preſerving the common diſtinction, if they were neither ceremonial, nor judicial, the conſequence is plain, that they were included in the moral law, of perpetual obligation.

Fourthly, If their covenanting was an act of obedience to the ceremonial, or judicial law, we might expect to find ceremonial *rites*, or judicial *ſtatutes*, the principal, or rather the only duties, to which they engaged. But inſtead of this, we find the moral law, the firſt as well as the ſecond table of it, the very ſubſtance of the duties to which they engaged. This could not be an act of obedience to the ceremonial law, for it did not enjoin moral duties, but various rites, reſpecting the external part of divine worſhip, under that diſpenſation; in this manner ſhadowing forth ſpiritual bleſſings to ſtrengthen for the diſcharge of moral duties: but the moral duties are preſcribed by the moral law. The judicial law might be ſaid to require duties reducible to the moral law, though only the ſecond table of it; but we find the whole moral law, and particularly the firſt table of it, the very ſubſtance of the duties to which they engaged. This you may ſee very evident, 2 Chron. xv. 12. *And they entered into a covenant to ſeek the Lord God of their fathers, with all their heart, and with all their ſoul.* One would think, that prejudice itſelf could ſcarcely make a man believe, that this was an engagement *only* to ceremonial duties. It is evidently the very *ſum* of the firſt table of the moral law, to *ſeek the Lord with all the heart, and with all the ſoul.* Had their covenants been ceremonial, or judicial, we might have expected to find correſponding duties in the front of their engagements; but we ſee it is otherwiſe.

It may be ſaid however, that if their covenanting was an act of obedience to the moral law of God, why were ceremonial, or judicial duties included in their engagements at all? And if their covenants, including moral duties, muſt be a proof that they were moral, why ſhould not their including ceremonial rites, and judicial ſtatutes, be a proof that they were ceremonial, or judicial? I anſwer, the argument is not concluſive. The ceremonial, and judicial laws, enjoined ONLY ceremonial and judicial duties. It is otherwiſe with the moral law: For,

although moral duties, may juſtly be conſidered as the ſubſtance of its requirements, the very firſt command, however, includes an obligation to believe whatever God reveals, and to practiſe whatever he requires. It will not, I apprehend, be denied, that the moral law binds to believe and practiſe whatever God reveals, or requires; and accordingly bound theſe Iſraelites to all their ceremonial rites, and judicial ſtatutes, although moral duties were the ſubſtance of its requirements. This being the caſe, if their covenanting was an act of obedience to the moral law, we may then expect to find moral duties the ſubſtance of their engagements: but as the ceremonial and judicial laws were a branch of the will of God, revealed to his church under that diſpenſation, we may expect to find theſe annexed, ſince the moral law binds to whatever God reveals. In this very point of view we find it repreſented, Deut. iv. 13. *And he declared unto you his covenant, which he commanded you to perform,* EVEN THE TEN COMMANDMENTS, *and he wrote them upon two tables of ſtone.* Here you ſee evidently the moral law is placed in the front, and ſtiled the COVENANT ITSELF, being the very ſubſtance of the duties to which they engaged. In like manner, we find ceremonial, and judicial duties annexed, as an appendage, ſo to ſpeak, ſuited unto that diſpenſation. Accordingly, the Man of God adds in the following verſes, *And the Lord commanded me, at that time, to teach you ſtatutes and judgments, that ye might do them in the land whither ye go over to poſſeſs it.* Here the ceremonial rites, and judicial ſtatutes are annexed, during their poſſeſſion of the promiſed land, which they were now to enter upon. We have likewiſe the ten commandments ſtiled, *The words of the covenant;* and again and again, *The tables of the covenant.* Had their covenanting been an act of obedience to the ceremonial or judicial law, it is very natural to think, that theſe would have been ſtiled the tables of the covenant; and the duties which they enjoined, placed firſt in order, as the ſubſtance of the covenant-engagements. But we ſee the very reverſe is the caſe; an evidence that their covenanting was a branch of obedience to the moral law.

I may add, that even granting that their covenant-engagements, including ceremonial and judicial duties, is a proof that they were ceremonial, or judicial, which I ſee no neceſſity to

grant, ſince the moral law binds to whatever God reveals; but admitting it, their covenant-engagements, including moral duties, muſt be a proof that they were moral, and the native conſequence is, that they were partly ceremonial, or judicial, and partly moral: and that as far as the duty was moral, its obligation muſt be perpetual; for the ceremony evaniſhing, or the obligation of the judicial ſtatute ceaſing, could never diſannul the *moral duty*. Almoſt every branch of divine worſhip, founded upon the moral law, had ſome ceremony or other annexed during that diſpenſation; but the moral duty continues, when the ſhadow is fled. Prayer is as much a moral duty as ever, although the ceremony of praying with the face toward Jeruſalem, and the windows perhaps opened, is long ſince evaniſhed. This is all the conſequence of granting the argument, that their engagements, including ceremonial rites, is a proof that their covenanting was ceremonial: their engagements including moral duties firſt and principally, muſt be an equal, or ſtronger proof that their covenanting was moral; and the ceremony abrogated, could never diſannul the moral duty.

Fifthly, If their covenanting was either ceremonial, or judicial, we might expect to find it introduced in the *ſame manner*, with other ceremonial rites, or judicial ſtatutes. Theſe are generally uſhered in after this manner, *The Lord ſpake unto Moſes, ſaying, Speak unto the children of Iſrael, and ſay unto them*: in this manner delivering ſome new rite, or ſtatute, to be obſerved. But their public covenanting is introduced without any ſuch formality, being a duty included in, or founded upon the moral law of God. This you may ſee, Exod. xix. 5. where we have public covenanting firſt mentioned, and not the leaſt appearance of any new rite, or ſtatute being enjoined; *If ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant*. In the beginning of the chapter, where I have choſen my text, it is ſaid indeed, *Theſe are the words of the covenant which the Lord commanded Moſes to make with the children of Iſrael, in the land of Moab*. But it is evident, this is not ſaid of the duty of *covenanting itſelf*: as introducing ſome new rite or ſtatute; for the duty was performed at mount Sinai, a number of years before. This only includes in it, that the Lord enjoined them to perform this duty a ſecond time; before they entered on Canaan's bloody wars: and that he delivered to

Moſes, the expreſs *form* of the covenant. No where, that I know of, do we find public covenanting enjoined, or introduced as the ceremonial rites, and judicial ſtatutes were generally introduced.

Thus I have laid before you, as ſhortly as I can, a few evidences that public vowing, or covenanting, is a *moral duty*. The Jewiſh covenants were not ceremonial; for they did not typify any thing concerning Chriſt to come in the fleſh, and ſalvation by him. They were not judicial; for no branch of civil affairs was regulated by them. Moral duties were the ſubſtance of their engagements; and theſe were not enjoined by the ceremonial, or judicial, but by the moral law. Nor was their covenanting introduced at firſt, in the uſual manner in which ceremonial rites, and judicial ſtatutes were delivered to them.—From all which it appears, that their covenanting was a moral duty of perpetual obligation.

It would have been very eaſy to enlarge on each of theſe particulars; but I have frequently thought, that diffuſe illuſtrations are calculated rather to embarraſs, and make ordinary hearers loſe ſight of the argument itſelf. A variety of other arguments have been uſed,* and I have not omitted them from any apprehenſion of their being inconcluſive; but it is affirmed, by adverſaries to covenanting, that it is the hinge of the controverſy, *Is covenanting a moral duty, or not?* I have therefore confined myſelf to this in particular †. I ſhall now proceed,

II. To conſider the OBLIGATION of public vows, or covenants, on *poſterity*. And if the morality of public vows, or covenants, has been controverted; their obligation on poſterity has been even more ſtrenuouſly oppoſed. As I muſt ſtudy

* See a Review of a paper lately written againſt the being, and binding obligation of our ſacred national covenants, eſpecially the ſolemn league and covenant of the three kingdoms.—As alſo, ſeveral publications by our brethren; particularly, Mr. Brown's letter on the perpetual obligation of the Scotch covenants.

† Some who heard the ſermons delivered, will perhaps remember, that on this head I propounded and anſwered a number of objections. I had no view, at that time, either to publiſh, or to anſwer Mr. H——n's numerous charges. And as all the objections natively occur afterward, to avoid repetition, they are here omitted. In the after examination of Mr. H——n's charges, the reader will find all that was delivered from the pulpit, in its proper place.

brevity, I ſhall not ſpend time in conſidering the obligation of vows, or oaths, on the perſons themſelves who vow, or ſwear, which ſome have denied. It appears to me, to be rather a wrangle about the propriety of the term *obligation*, than any real difference in ſentiment. However this be, it ſatisfies ſome, that the ſcripture is expreſs, that a man binds his ſoul with a vow. I may likewiſe notice, that if there is any thing immoral, or erroneous, in public vows, or covenants; if there is any thing contrary unto the word of God, it is not contended that this is, or can be binding upon poſterity: For, whatever be the obligation of vows, or covenants, it is ſurely hard to think, that any thing can bind a man to a direct breach of the moral law of God; whether of omiſſion, or commiſſion. Every obligation certainly muſt give way to the authority of God, in the divine law. It is then allowed, on all hands, that the *matter* of theſe vows muſt be *moral*, antecedently binding on the conſcience by the law of God; and this being granted, I am in no heſitation concerning their obligation on poſterity. And I ſhall do little more than mention ſome of the arguments by which this has uſually been ſupported. I may likewiſe notice, that on this branch of diſcourſe, I have no concern with theſe who refuſe that covenanting is a moral duty; theſe can never be expected to own its obligation on poſterity: but theſe I am now to deal with are ſuch, as will not perhaps refuſe the obligation of religious vows, or covenants, on the perſons who come under ſuch engagements; but cannot ſee how poſterity are concerned with them. And,

Firſt, It has been urged, that public vows, or covenants, are binding on poſterity, on account of their being conſidered as *included*, in their covenanting anceſtors. I know very well, that this has been much derided; but I am not yet as certain if it deſerves it. One ſcripture ordinarily mentioned in ſupport of it is, Hoſ. xii. 4. where it is ſaid, that the *Lord found Jacob in Bethel, and there*, ſays the prophet, *He ſpake with us*. At Bethel, Jacob entered into a ſolemn vow, or covenant, that the Lord ſhould be his God, and that he would ſerve him, would give him the tenth of all, or do every thing requiſite for the ſupport of his worſhip and ſervice. This, it is alledged, the prophet has in his eye; and therefore immediately exhorts

them, to turn unto the Lord as their God, according to the vow, or covenant, which was binding upon them.

Another ſcripture urged is, Heb. vii. 9, 10. where Levi is ſaid to pay tithes in Abraham, becauſe he was yet in his father's loins, when Melchiſedec met him. On this, I ſhall juſt give you a few ſentences of the judicious Dr. Owen. And I may notice, that he does not at all mean to eſtabliſh the obligation of the vows, or covenants, in queſtion; it is not to be expected: and this is, perhaps, one reaſon why he alledges, that the meaning of the text is very difficult. The force, ſays he, of this proof, (*viz.* of Levi's paying tythes in Abraham), ſeems to depend upon a double principle. (1.) That children, the whole poſteriry of any one, are in his loins before they are born: And this principle, ſays he, is ſure, in the light of nature, and common reaſon. (2.) That what any one doth, that all his poſterity are eſteemed to do, in and by him. He owns, this does not hold in every caſe; but Abraham entered into a covenant in the name of his poſterity, and that it does hold in ſuch a caſe. I have no reaſon to conceal his alledging, that Abraham was, ſo to ſpeak, the founder of a church; and that poſterity have a greater connection with ſuch, than with their more immediate progenitors: For, if parents entering into a covenant, including their offspring, is binding on their poſterity, in one caſe; why ſhould it not be binding in other caſes alſo, where it is lawful, where it is duty thus to covenant?—Theſe ſcriptures, duly conſidered, may perhaps evidence, that this argument is not altogether ſo whimſical, as ſome have repreſented it.

Secondly, It is likewiſe argued, that theſe public vows, or covenants, are binding, when they are entered into by the *civil rulers*, as the *repreſentatives* of the people. This argument is ſupported, by the well-known covenant made by Joſhua with the Gibeonites. This covenant, Saul, in his miſguided zeal, ſought to diſannul. Perhaps he reaſoned like ſome in our day, what concern have I with Joſhua's covenant, or oath of the princes, now when hundreds of years are elapſed? We know, however, that the Lord manifeſted his diſpleaſure in a very remarkable manner, for this attempt to violate the covenant of their fathers. I may here notice, that I mean not at all to reſt the controverſy on this ſingle argument; and there-

fore, although a variety of objections ſhould be muſtered up, I conſider the cauſe I maintain as very little affected, ſince other arguments are numerous. At the ſame time I muſt ſay, that it appears to me an argument of conſiderable ſtrength, for the obligation of public vows, or covenants on poſterity.

The only objection I have yet ſeen, which indicates any meaſure of common ſagacity, is this; that public covenants are binding on poſterity in things *civil*, but not in *religious* matters; and that this was not a religious, but a civil covenant. I am ſtill, however, at a loſs to know how it comes to paſs, that covenants, which reſpect to ſecond-table duties only, where Jehovah is, ſo to ſpeak, leſs immediately a party in the covenant, ſhould be more binding than theſe which include not only ſecond, but firſt-table duties alſo, where God is more immediately a party; providing always, that the matter of the covenant is agreeable to his will, revealed in his word. It will, perhaps, be ſaid, that it is every man's privilege, and his duty alſo, to judge for himſelf in religious matters; and that the obligation of religious covenants on poſterity, deprives them of this liberty to judge for themſelves. I am certain, if this conſequence is juſt, I do not underſtand it. Liberty of judging for ourſelves certainly conſiſts, in judging whether this, or that is agreeable to the word of God; if it exceeds this, it is not liberty, but licentiouſneſs. Well, although religious covenants are binding on poſterity, they have certainly all the liberty they can wiſh for, to conſider the matter of theſe covenants deliberately, and to compare them with the unerring word; and to conſider, if the word of God maintains the obligation of ſuch covenants on poſterity. No man, in his ſenſes, will affirm, that poſterity are blindly and implicitly to conſider covenants as binding on them; or to conſider any thing as binding on them, which is contrary to God's revealed will. Liberty of judging for ourſelves, does not appear to me, to be in the leaſt affected by maintaining the obligation of religious covenants; it ought rather to encourage our diligence in judging for ourſelves.

It may likewiſe be objected, that we can eaſily ſee reaſons, why the engagements of anceſtors ſhould be obligatory on poſterity, in civil matters: That if this were not the caſe, every thing would frequently be thrown into the utmoſt confuſion, and the conſequences be exceedingly fatal to ſociety; but that

no ſuch reaſons can be aſſigned, why the engagements of progenitors ſhould be obligatory, in religious matters. I know very well, that this affords ample matter for declamation to ſome, who are, perhaps, as fond of reaſon, as revelation. I would only remind ſuch, that this is a matter in which we are to be directed by the word of God; and to be received, or rejected, not on account of our ſeeing reaſons of utility for, or againſt it; but according as it agrees, or diſagrees with the divine rule. And as the word of God repreſents ſuch public vows or covenants, as equally binding in civil and religious matters, as was evidently the caſe in all the Jewiſh covenants; whatever is a proof of their being obligatory in the one, is no contemptible proof of the other alſo. But, as I obſerved already, I mean not to reſt the argument wholly, nor principally on theſe; and therefore, I add,

Thirdly, It has been argued, that public vows or covenants, are binding on poſterity, by way of *motive* and *excitement*; as they ſet an example to theſe who come after, if, in God's adorable providence, they are brought into ſimilar circumſtances. It will not, I apprehend, be denied by any who acknowledge covenanting to be a moral duty, that the practice of godly progenitors is binding, by way of example; agreeable to the divine direction, *Go thy way forth by the footſteps of the flock.* As far as their practice was agreeable to the divine rule, it muſt be obligatory in like circumſtances.

Fourthly, That public vows, or covenants, are binding on poſterity, is evident; becauſe we find a holy and righteous God, denouncing *awful judgments* on after generations, on account of violating the covenant of their fathers. The words of our text and context are an evident proof of it. Here we ſee Jehovah denouncing awful judgments againſt the generations yet to come, if they ſhould violate the covenant which he made with their fathers, when he brought them out of the land of Egypt. If this covenant was not binding on after generations, they could not forſake, they could not violate it; nor would the Judge of all the earth, who cannot but do right, either threaten, or inflict judgments, for the violation of a covenant which was not binding on them. Yea, it is evident, that when they ſhould be caſt out of the promiſed land, or conſumed in it, the man of God aſſures them, that it ſhould be on

account of the breach of this covenant, which could never be the caſe, if it was not binding on them to obſerve it. This appears to me, a plain ſcriptural proof of the obligation of ſuch covenants on after generations: and as the covenant mentioned in the text included religious, as well as civil duties, it is an evidence, that covenants reſpecting either of theſe are equally binding on poſterity, and abundantly ſtrengthens a former argument.

Fifthly, Public vows, or covenants, are binding on poſterity, becauſe the *word of God* expreſsly declares it. It is a matter of far leſs importance to me, at leaſt, what is the particular mode or manner in which they are binding, if the word of God aſſures me they are ſo; this ought to ſatisfy conſcience. For proof of this, you may conſult the thirty-fifth of Jeremiah's prophecy. There you may ſee the prophet, agreeable to the divine mandate, calls the houſe of the Rechabites to drink wine. They anſwer him very peremptorily, that they would drink no wine; for Jonadab their father charged them to drink none, and to have neither houſes nor vineyards. The reaſon of this uncommon charge is thought, by ſeveral interpreters, to be the following. The Rechabites were ſtrangers in Iſrael, the offſpring of Jethro, father-in-law to Moſes: and though they did not fully conform to the Jewiſh religion, in all its various ceremonies, they were firmly attached unto, and deſired to worſhip the God of Iſrael, and live among his people. And that Jonadab gave them the charge, leſt if they ſhould have houſes, fields, and vineyards, drink wine, and make a figure in the world, it might procure them envy, and provoke the Iſraelites to expel them from their coaſts. Now, it is generally allowed, that it was long after the days of Jonadab, when the prophet deſired them to drink wine; as we ſee in the third verſe: he mentions ſeveral generations, but no mention of Jonadab, who was probably more antient. A commentator of eſtabliſhed character, thinks it very probable, that it was the ſame Jonadab, whom Jehu took up into his chariot about three hundred years before this; and that he was a chief man among the Rechabites. And you may ſee they conſider this charge as ſtill binding upon them; and the God of heaven approves of it, and promiſes, that Jonadab ſhould not want a man to ſtand before him. Accordingly, ſome hiſtorians tell us, that the Rechabites were known many years after Chriſt, profeſſing Chriſtianity.

It will perhaps be ſaid, that there was neither vow nor oath in this caſe. I anſwer, there might, although it is not expreſly mentioned. But if the mere charge of parents is binding on their offspring many years after, the Lord himſelf approving of it; I apprehend every one may ſee the obligation much more evident, in caſe of a ſolemn vow including poſterity; if the matter is agreeable to the word of God.

That the word of God declares, that public vows, or covenants, are binding on poſterity, is evident alſo in the verſes preceding our text. In the 11th verſe, they are ſaid to ſtand before God, with their *little ones*, to enter into covenant with him. Their little ones could not enter into covenant for themſelves; and therefore, behoved to be conſidered as included in their parent's covenant, which was binding on them. I inſiſt not on the covenant being ſaid to be made *with him that is not here with us this day*, ver. 18. Becauſe, although it is very probable that poſterity are intended, it will bear a different ſenſe, and has another meaning affixed, by ſeveral commentators. But in the laſt verſe of the chapter, the man of God declares, that it was binding on them, and their children for ever, to do all the words of this law, or covenant. Theſe appear to me, expreſs ſcripture declarations, that public vows, or covenants, are binding on poſterity. I ſhall only add,

Sixthly, That public vows, or covenants, of anceſtors, if agreeable to the word of God, are binding on poſterity; becauſe in the very nature of church-fellowſhip, poſterity *voluntarily* and *practically*, put themſelves under theſe engagements. Our forefathers covenanted ſome two or three generations ago; and when the ſucceeding generation demanded admiſſion to ſealing ordinances, they practically, or rather explicitly declared, that they deſired to be in the ſame ſituation, under the ſame obligations, as theſe with whom they joined in full communion. When the next generation demanded admiſſion, they, in like manner, practically came under the ſame obligations with theſe to whom they joined themſelves in ſealing ordinances: and this brings it very near our own times. Why, our forefathers compiled a confeſſion, and covenanted; and when the next generation were admitted to ſealing ordinances, they practically declared their adherence to their covenant-engagements, as well as to their confeſſion.

Whatever you may think of it, I apprehend, if you conſider it deliberately you will find; that when a man is admitted a member of any ſociety whatever, he voluntarily comes under the ſame obligations with the ſociety of which he is conſtitute a member. And that every religious ſociety, when members are admitted by them, conſider them as coming under the ſame obligations with themſelves; and theſe who are admitted, practically ſay they do. Nothing can well be more evident than this, that when either the eſtabliſhed church, or different denominations of diſſenters admit their members, they conſider them as coming under the ſame obligations and regulations with themſelves; and thoſe who are admitted, practically declare the ſame before God and man. When you were erected into a diſſenting congregation in this corner, you had your principles which you eſpouſed; and when new members are admitted, do you not conſider them as eſpouſing theſe principles juſt as much as yourſelves; yea, does not every one view them as ſo doing? And the caſe is the ſame with a church in general.

It were very eaſy to illuſtrate this by civil ſocieties, or corporations. There are many of theſe in cities, as antient perhaps as our covenants. They had their original regulations which they bound themſelves to obſerve at their firſt erection; and to this day, when a man is admitted a member of one of theſe ſocieties, he practically, yea, explicitly ſubjects himſelf to theſe original regulations, juſt as much as the perſons who framed them. It is readily granted, that civil ſocieties may alter, or new-model their regulations as they ſee cauſe; although I remember the judicious Dr. Owen, when ſpeaking of Levi paying tythes in Abraham, alledges, that if the original regulations, even of a civil ſociety are good, and agreeable to nature's light, poſterity have no right to alter them. But granting that civil ſocieties both may, and frequently do alter their regulations; and that religious ſocieties, if their obligations, which they have profeſſedly come under, contain in them the very worſt branch of Popery, they not only may, but undoubtedly ought to rectify them: at the ſame time, if the regulations, and obligations which religious ſocieties have come under, are agreeable to, and founded upon the word of God; if poſterity alter, or reject them, they muſt be accountable un-

to Jehovah, for changing his laws and ordinances, which they certainly are, if agreeable unto, and founded upon his word. And if they are not altered, or rejected, it is very evident, that when one generation after another desire admission to sealing ordinances, they voluntarily, and practically, put themselves under these obligations; just as persons who join themselves to a civil society, come under the regulations of that society. Nor does length of time alter the matter; unless it should alter the statutes of the God of heaven. It will perhaps be said, that this is a modelling of religious, by the rules of civil societies. I answer, it is only an illustration, which the scripture abundantly warrants.

Thus I have laid before you, a few of the arguments for the obligation of religious covenants on posterity. Binding, because posterity are considered as included in their ancestors, as Levi in Abraham;—binding when they are entered into by the civil rulers, as the representatives of the people, as in Joshua's covenant;—and particularly, binding by way of example, when in matter and manner they are agreeable to the word of God;—binding, because the judge of all the earth, who cannot but do right, denounces awful judgments for the violation of them;—binding, because the word declares expressly they are so;—and because common sense and reason dictate, that when we join ourselves unto any society, civil or religious, we voluntarily come under all the same obligations which they are under; and if they are founded on the word of God, we have no right to alter, or reject them. I now proceed,

III. To consider, if this is a DUTY, which God, in his adorable providence, calls us to practise, in our PRESENT *circumstances*. I mean not to enlarge on this, as I have a very different opinion of our brethren's principles, who differ from us on this point; and the principles of these who deny covenanting altogether. Beside, I have several times already laid my sentiments, on this particular, before you; as it is the duty of Christians, and especially in a shattered and divided day, to be ready to give a reason to every one that asketh it. But, as it is frequently said, since ye acknowledge covenanting to be a

moral duty; ſince you maintain the *obligation* of our covenants; why do ye not *practiſe* covenanting? The following obſervations may not be unneceſſary,

1*ſt*, Although covenanting is a moral duty of perpetual obligation, it is not a duty which we are called to perform at *all times*, but when God, in his adorable providence, brings his church into particular circumſtances. In other words, it is generally allowed, that it is not a STATED, but an OCCASIONAL duty. If you aſk what I mean by a ſtated, and an occaſional duty? I anſwer, a *ſtated* duty is one, for the performance of which, the Lord has fixed particular ſtated times in his word. Family-worſhip is a ſtated duty; the word of God enjoins us to perform it every morning and evening, Pſal. xcii. 2. *To ſhew forth thy loving-kindneſs in the morning, and thy faithfulneſs* EVERY *night*. Public-worſhip is a ſtated duty; God has ſet apart one day in ſeven for the performance of it. I need not multiply inſtances, on a particular ſo very evident.—An *occaſional* duty is one, for the performance of which, there is no particular ſtated time fixed in the word; but the *ſeaſons* of it to be determined, by the ſituation of the church, and occurrences of providence, compared with the example of the godly, recorded in the word, for our direction. Such is an occaſional duty, with reſpect to the church in general. Public faſting and thankſgiving, are occaſional duties: there is no particular time fixed in the word, for the performance of theſe duties; but we are to be directed by the ſituation of the church, and the diſpenſations of providence towards her. With reſpect to individuals, charity, or ſupporting the indigent, is an occaſional duty. It is true, we are required to give, for this purpoſe, on the firſt day of the week; and in this branch of it, may be conſidered as a ſtated duty. But it will readily be granted, that we ought to communicate to the neceſſities of the poor, on other occaſions alſo. But for this there is no particular time fixed in the word: we are to be directed by providence proſpering, and objects of charity preſented to us.

It will, perhaps, be ſaid, that it muſt be an occaſional duty of a very extraordinary nature, which we are never called to perform all our life-time. I anſwer, that this may ſometimes be the caſe, appears to me undeniable. Numbers may ſtill ſtand in need of the liberality of others, and never have a call

in providence, to perform alms deeds all their life-time. Perhaps it will be ſaid, that although this may be the caſe with individuals, it cannot be the caſe with any church, or people in general: I apprehend it certainly may. It is ſurely an unqueſtionable moral duty, to defend ourſelves from the invaſions and inroads of our public enemies, when God in his providence affords us a probability of ſucceſs. It is evidently included in the ſixth command of the moral law, which enjoins us to uſe all lawful endeavours, to preſerve our own life, and the life of others. This is no extraordinary moral duty; and yet there may be ſtates and nations, who, for ages or generations, have no public enemies attacking them, (it were, perhaps, no great difficulty to give inſtances) and ſo have never a call in providence to perform this unqueſtionable moral duty. And it would ſeem that our worthy anceſtors, conſidered a call to covenanting, as having ſome connection with attacks made on their civil and religious privileges alſo.

If we turn our attention unto the Old-Teſtament diſpenſation, under which it is allowed, on all hands, that covenanting was an unqueſtionable duty, of whatever ſort it was; we have no account of their covenanting, from their leaving the plains of Moab, until the days of Aſa, upwards of 500 years. We have no account of Samuel, Elijah, Eliſha, theſe eminent prophets, exhorting the Iſraelites to practiſe it in their day: nor can we ſuppoſe them to have been ignorant of it; for we find Elijah complaining to his God, that they had forſaken his covenant. David, Solomon, Jehoſaphat, Hezekiah, and other reforming kings, did not practiſe it; and the Spirit of God caſts no reflection upon them, on this account. It is not obſcurely hinted, that David's ſin, in the matter of Uriah, and numbering the people, were at leaſt his principal public failures. Nor can it well be ſuppoſed, that they were ignorant of this being a duty binding on them, when God in his adorable providence called unto it. It cannot well be ſuppoſed, that godly Jehoſaphat could be ignorant of it, when it was performed in the days of his father; and as ſome can remember events, which happened in the fourth or fifth year of their age, he might perhaps remember it himſelf.—However this be, it cannot be thought that ſuch a remarkable tranſaction in his father's reign, would never come to his ears. And when we conſider the

character of this truly amiable Prince, and eminent ſaint, whoſe heart was lifted up in the ways of his God; his pious care in enjoining his princes, prieſts, and levites, to teach the law of the Lord in the cities of Judah; yea, his going through the people himſelf, from Beerſheba to mount Ephraim, to bring them back to the Lord God of their fathers: we can ſcarcely think he would have omitted the duty of covenanting, without being convinced, that it was not in providence required of him. ——Were theſe things attended unto, we might expect rather leſs ſeverity, on account of our ſentiments on this particular *.

Now, covenanting being an occaſional duty, the word of God containing no expreſs precept concerning the ſeaſons of it; we ought certainly to have recourſe to ſcripture example for our direction. Had we neither ſcripture precept, nor example, with reſpect to the ſeaſon of it, we might have ſome ſhadow of reaſon for alledging, that the church was to judge for herſelf, with reſpect to the ſeaſons of it. But when we have a variety of ſcripture examples, and the approved example of the godly, equivalent to a precept, to maintain that the church is to judge for herſelf, without regarding theſe examples, (as ſome would ſeem to alledge) is evidently to deſpiſe the means of direction, with which we are favoured. And it is true, we may find ſeveral particulars in our preſent ſituation, correſponding to the circumſtances of the godly in their covenanting periods, in ſcripture. I apprehend, that the condition of the church, in her militant ſtate, is never ſo diſſimilar, in different periods, that no particulars can be found correſponding. But we ought principally to attend unto theſe things which are connected with the diſcharging of this ſolemn duty. And there are two particulars, which appear to me very intimately connected with the ſeaſons of it; and which we may find in every covenanting period in ſcripture, neither of which are to be found among us at this day. I do not mean, that theſe two circumſtances by themſelves, are ſufficient to conſtitute a call to covenanting; although they may go a conſiderable length in clearing our way: but if we proceed while they are wanting, we adventure without ſcripture example.

* Had Mr. H——n conſidered theſe particulars, he might have ſpared much of his deriſion, while he was only meddling with ſtrife, which belongs not to him.

1. When we look into covenanting periods in ſcripture, we ſee that all theſe who were joining in reformation, with any meaſure of *becoming zeal* and *activity*, chearfully engaged in the ſolemn duty. In the plains of Moab, and in Joſiah's covenant alſo, it is very evident, that the *whole body* of the people joined in it, without diviſion or diſtraction. In the days of Aſa, matters were conſiderably different. Ten tribes had revolted from the government in David's family, and had deſerted the temple worſhip, and were not yet carried captive, as they were in the days of Joſiah. But, even in this divided and ſhattered ſituation, both as a church and ſtate; not only all ſuch as evidenced a becoming zeal for reformation in Judah, but out of the ten tribes alſo, they acceded in great abundance, and ſolemnly engaged to ſeek the Lord God of their fathers, 2 Chron. xv. 9.: a plain evidence, that all ſuch as were animated by a ſuitable deſire after reformation, and evidenced it by a *becoming activity* in promoting it, were chearfully harmonizing in the covenant of their God.

You may likewiſe look at the tenth chapter of Nehemiah, where you will ſee, that after an account of the principal perſons who ſealed, we are told, that *the reſt of the people, the prieſts, the levites, the porters, the ſingers, the nethinims, and all theſe who had ſeparated themſelves from the people of the lands, unto the law of their God, their wives, their ſons and their daughters, every one having knowledge, and underſtanding; they clave unto their brethren*, &c. Now, what does all this mean? In a word, all theſe who were animated by an honeſt deſire after, and evidencing it by a *becoming activity* in reformation, in the midſt of grievous defections, and many external dangers, chearfully harmonized in the oath of God.

Theſe are the principal covenanting periods under the Old-Teſtament diſpenſation; and there is not the remoteſt evidence, that in any of them, theſe who evidenced *ſuitable zeal* and *activity* in reformation, were ſwallowed up in jarrings and animoſities among themſelves. It is hoped, however, that both We, and our Brethren, who differ from us, evidence ſome meaſure of *becoming activity* in reformation-work; but we no more join together, in any public religious exerciſe. We are rent and torn, we are divided in the Lord's anger; and frequently, one way or other, oppoſing one another. I am no

way aſhamed to declare, that in ſuch a ſhattered ſituation of theſe who are equally active in reformation, I can ſee no precedent for covenanting in the word of God.

2. In all the covenanting periods in ſcripture, there was no *viſible improbability* of accompliſhing any of the principal ends of the duty. It is certainly agreeable in every duty, when there is ſome reaſonable expectation of gaining the principal ends of it. No doubt, the *glory of God* ought to be our *chief deſign*, in every duty; but it is the glory of God, in accompliſhing ſome particular ends. And in covenanting, the glory of God, in encouraging and ſtrenthening one another, to go on in reformation-work; by giving all the aſſurance of a ſolemn vow, or oath, that we will ſtand by one another, whatever danger may await, ſeems to be one principal end of the duty: I ſay, the glory of God, in encouraging one another to proceed in reformation-work, by giving all reaſonable aſſurance, that we will cleave to each other, whatever danger ſhould attend it, ſeems to be one principal end of the duty. In all the covenanting periods in ſcripture, there was no *viſible hinderance*, in the way of their encouraging one another; when all theſe who evidenced ſuitable activity, were joining hand in hand in the ſolemn duty. They might very reaſonably expect to attain the deſired end.

But have not we at preſent, *every viſible obſtruction*, in the way of attaining this deſired end of the duty; namely, encouraging one another, to proceed in reformation-work? We are divided, and broken in judgment: one party covenant, and they claſs what appears to them, at leaſt, to be the diſtinguiſhing principles of others, among the catalogue of errors which they abjure. Should another party covenant, they behoved, in their turn, to claſs the diſtinguiſhing principles of the former, among the catalogue of errors which they abjure. Is there the leaſt *probability*; nay, I might ſay *poſſibility*, of attaining the principal deſign of the duty, in ſuch a ſituation; I mean, encouraging one another to proceed in reformation-work? No, verily: it is rather to do all in our power, to bear down and cruſh one another; and to make covenanting an engine, to beat down the very thing it is deſigned to rear up; and to make vows, or oaths, claſh againſt one another, like ſwords in the heat of battle.

I again desire you then, to consider the covenanting periods in scripture, and you may find these two particulars in each of them: all who were suitably active in reformation-work harmonizing in it, and no visible obstruction to their encouraging one another. But, *at present*, these who are equally active in reformation, cannot join together in it; nor can they encourage, but forswear one another's principles. And as there is no express precept for the *seasons* of this duty, we ought to conduct ourselves by scripture-example: and you must judge for yourselves, if there is any scripture precedent, for covenanting in such a shattered situation; different denominations abjuring one anothers principles; and if this has the remotest appearance of promoting the design of the duty. I cannot think we deserve much derision, although *numbers* of people, *swearing* and *forswearing* the *very same thing*, should appear to us, in a *very serious* point of view.—It is for these, and such like reasons, that we cannot consider this as a season for covenanting: the reasons which some, who differ from us, have assigned to our hand, I can honestly declare, I never saw the force of them, and consider them as a mere fiction.

Perhaps it will be said, if we are never to covenant without these two particulars, *harmony* and *probability* of encouraging one another to proceed in reformation, we are never likely to find a season for this duty. I answer, it does not appear to me in this light. Before the *unhappy rupture*, both of these circumstances might be found with Seceders: and what has been, may yet again be the case, in adorable providence. It is readily granted, that there were many at that time in the established church, and many still, who wish well to reformation-work: but while they continue their present connection, I cannot consider them as evidencing a *becoming activity* in reformation, without considering Seceders, as running to unwarrantable extremes. I must therefore consider Seceders, although not as the only *real friends* to reformation, a thought which never entered my mind; as these, however, who are evidencing a *becoming zeal* and *activity* in reformation-work. At that time they were harmonizing, and no visible hinderance in the way of encouraging one another; so that both of these particulars were their attainment at that time.

This leads me to answer a question frequently put; since

we conſidered covenanting as a duty called for near forty years ago, how have we now come to ſee it in a different light? I anſwer; I cannot tell in what light I might have viewed it at that time. Aſa conſidered it is a duty called for in his day; his ſon, every way as pious as himſelf, did not conſider it as called for in his: had he lived in our day, he ſhould have had the ſame puzzeling queſtion frequently caſt in his teeth. And it is certainly nothing ſtrange, although the circumſtances of the church ſhould be very different, in the ſpace of near forty years. But, from what I have already noticed, the anſwer is plain. At that time, theſe who exerciſed a *becoming zeal* and *activity* in reformation, were harmonizing; and, in this reſpect, had ſcripture-example; and every reaſonable expectation of encouraging one another to proceed in reformation; or, of promoting a principal deſign of the duty. But it is clear as ſun-ſhine, that both of theſe are now evaniſhed; we are ſhattered in pieces, and have no ſcripture-example, nor the remoteſt probability of promoting the deſign of the duty. The queſtion then admits of a very plain anſwer.

In ſuch a ſhattered ſituation, of theſe who are equally attached to reformation, it appears to me, both more ſcriptural and expedient, to eſpouſe and defend covenanted *principles*, to maintain covenant *obligations*, and to urge, and enforce covenant *duties*; while we have neither ſcripture precedent for covenanting in our ſhattered condition, nor the remoteſt probability of accompliſhing the ends of it.—I readily own, that there is ſome danger in being dull, in underſtanding the language of providence, leſt we fall behind and loſe ſight of the myſterious wheels; and ſome danger in running before them alſo, leſt they ſhould come after and cruſh us: and therefore, we ought ſtill to take the word for our guide, in reading the language of providence.

Some of the leſs judicious will perhaps alledge, that I am denying covenanting altogether; but certainly there is a very wide difference between denying an occaſional duty, and refuſing that we are called to it, in certain circumſtances. No doubt, our brethren are ſatisfied that they have a call in providence to this duty; and would trample on their own judgment, did they neglect it: at the ſame time, it is certainly warrant-

ble for us, to give a reaſon for our own views of this matter, eſpecially as we are ſometimes much miſrepreſented.

I ſhall only notice further, that I am not quite ſatisfied concerning the propriety of twenty or thirty perſons covenanting in different congregations, once a year, or once in two or three years, for the ſpace of forty years running; much in the ſame way, as a number are admitted, time after time, to ſealing ordinances: it has a conſiderable appearance of placing covenanting among ordinary ſtated duties. I am pretty certain there is no precedent for this in ſcripture. And although I am not ſo well acquainted with the practice of our anceſtors, as ſome others are; I apprehend, they did not carry it on in this manner. When they conſidered the call as renewed, or continued, the *ſame perſons* who had before covenanted, together with *others*, again renewed the ſolemn ſervice; and do not ſeem to have conſidered it as an ordinance like baptiſm, to be adminiſtred *once* to every one, and no more of it, however frequent the call in providence. Nor do I mean any reflection on our Brethren; I could much rather wiſh that our breaches were healed than widened: I only mention what I ſee, together with ſome other particulars, would be ſome difficulty to me, in the preſent mode of covenanting; and which they have no doubt conſidered, and are ſatisfied of the propriety of them.

It is very true, I may be miſtaken; my views of the importance of covenanting, of the ſeaſons and manner of it, may be lame, or deficient; but I am certain it is undeſigned. And it is poſſible that ſome of our Brethren may run into an oppoſite extreme; conſidering it as ſo indiſpenſibly requiſite, that without it there can be no reformation. This I freely own, I do not underſtand.—But I ſhall conclude this branch of my ſubject, with obſerving, that I was rather inclined to omit it; not on account of heſitation concerning it, or any apprehenſion of difficulty, but in order to avoid altercation with our Brethren; but found I could not, with any meaſure of decency. I now proceed,

IV. To ſhew, that BREACH of covenant with God, muſt be a very *heinous ſin*.

When a church, or people, have entered into public vows, or covenants, we may be very certain that all of them, as in-

dividuals, will frequently be chargeable with breach of vows, as in many things we offend. But when they act like Chriſtians, this will not be approven of, or delighted in; no: it will be matter of bitter lamentation before God in ſecret. But it is a much more heinous breach of covenant, when a church or people, openly and avowedly reject their covenants, and covenant-engagements; and, perhaps, ignominiouſly burn them in the public ſtreets, and reprobate them from pulpit and preſs. This is well known to be the caſe with theſe lands; and when matters come to this height, it is a very heinous ſin. We are told in our excellent Catechiſm, that ſome ſins, both *in themſelves*, and alſo on account of their *aggravations*, are more heinous than others. And that open breach of public vows is heinous *in itſelf*, may appear from the few particulars following.

1. It is a POLLUTING of the holy name of God. This Jehovah himſelf declares by the prophet, Jer. xxxiv. 16. where we have an account of a covenant entered into, and very ſuddenly violated; and, ſays Jehovah, *My name which ye have* POLLUTED. It is certainly heinous to pollute, to profane the name of God in common converſation, as many do: it is hard to ſee, how there can be either profit or pleaſure in it; and is an indication of a perſon loſt, as to any ſuitable impreſſions of a divine Being: but it is ſtill more heinous, to profane the name of God, in the matter of a *ſolemn vow*. This is to profane the name of God, by the vileſt *perfidy*; and hence it is ſaid of the Iſraelites, that they were *unſtedfaſt and perfidious in God's covenant*. The man who has no regard to veracity, in common converſation, is juſtly deſpiſed; but the man who diſregards an oath, is a perſon of the moſt deteſted character: and to pour contempt on public vows, is to diſregard the oath of God. It is a ſin doubly criminal; a complicated breach of the law of God. To neglect covenant duties, is a breach of one or other of the divine commands, previous to any vow whatever; but after ſolemn vows, it is a breach of two or more of the divine commands at once. Idolatry is a breach of the ſecond command, antecedent to any vow whatever; but after vows, it is likewiſe a heinous violation of the third command, a taking God's holy name in vain.

2. It is a ſpiritual ROBBERY. I need not ſcruple to uſe the expreſſion, when it is uſed by the Spirit of God, Mal. iii. 8. where the Lord himſelf puts it by way of queſtion, *Will a man rob God?* Intimating, that it is an aggravated iniquity. Will a man, a worm, a guilty worm, attempt to rob GOD; that God in whoſe hand is his life and breath, and on whoſe bounty he depends, for every thing he enjoys, and who can cruſh him into miſery in an inſtant! *But ye have robbed me,* ſays Jehovah; *even this whole nation.*

The Lord has certainly a propriety in a profeſſing people, a ſpecial propriety in the truly godly. And in public vows, or covenants, they devote, they ſurrender themſelves unto him, to be no more their own but his; they ſolemnly recognize, and approve of his propriety in them, Ezek. xvi. 8. *I—entered into a covenant with thee, ſaith the Lord God; and thou becameſt mine.* Now, when they openly reject and diſclaim their covenant-engagements, they rob God of his right of that propriety in them, which they recognized in a very ſolemn manner. And if Jehovah ſharply reproved his antient church, for robbing him in tythes and offerings, will he not reprove theſe who rob him, by retracting that ſurrender which they have made of themſelves unto him? The robber, among men, may eſcape deſerved puniſhment from men; but ſo ſhall not the covenant-breakers eſcape the juſtice of the living God, if mercy prevent not, and grant repentance.

3. It is likewiſe ſpiritual ADULTERY, Jer. xxxi. 32.—*Which my covenant they brake, although I was an huſband unto them, ſaith the Lord.* Plainly intimating, that it was a marriage-covenant, and that he had always acted the part of an affectionate huſband; but, by breach of covenant, they had acted like a woman who treacherouſly departs from her huſband. This abundantly evinces, that it is a very heinous iniquity: a gracious God uniformly acting toward worthleſs ſinners, as a moſt affectionate huſband; but ſinners acting like an harlot, who can no more bluſh. I ſhall mention only two particular aggravations, as corroborating evidences, that it is a very heinous ſin.

(1.) When a church or people openly reject their covenants, it is an evidence that they are *hardened* in iniquity and become quite *ſhameleſs* in it. We find this ſet forth, in the word of

God, as a very heinous aggravation of iniquity. Pſal. lxxiii. 9. *They ſet their mouth againſt the heavens.* They are hardened, and become quite fearleſs in ſinning. Jer. vi. 15. *Were they aſhamed when they had committed abomination? Nay, they were not at all aſhamed, neither could they bluſh; therefore they ſhall fall among theſe that fall.* And in the firſt Pſalm, where the inſpired penman mentions a mournful gradation in criminality; the firſt is *the counſels of ungodly men;* this, as it might well be ſuſpected, is ſoon ſucceeded by *walking in the ways of ſinners:* but the laſt and moſt heinous of all, is the mounting *the chair of the ſcorner;* which is evidently the caſe with many in our day, with reſpect to our covenant-engagements.

(2.) When a people, in this manner, reject their covenant-engagements, it is a *general*, an almoſt *univerſal* ſin. And hence, if they are not miſtaken, who are reviling our covenants, from pulpit and preſs, the generality of the age will approve and applaud them. As a diſeaſe, when it becomes epidemical, or general, is the more diſtreſſing and alarming: ſo, when a ſin becomes general; when all ranks, high and low, are infected with it, perſons in every office, civil and religious, it is certainly the more heinous. In this manner, we find the prophet Jeremiah ſetting forth the aggravation of his people's ſin, chap. v. near the beginning. He firſt animadverts on the ſins of the common people; *Though they ſay, The Lord liveth; ſurely they ſwear falſly.—I ſaid, ſurely theſe are poor, they are fooliſh.—I will get me unto the great men, and will ſpeak unto them; for they have known the way of the Lord, and the judgment of their God: but theſe have altogether broken the yoke, and burſt the bonds; wherefore a lion out of the foreſt ſhall ſlay them!* This leads me to notice,

4. It muſt be a heinous ſin, becauſe in the word of God, we find *awful judgments* denounced againſt covenant-breakers of various ſorts. Lev. xxvi. 15, 16. *So—that ye break my covenant, I alſo will do this unto you, I will even appoint over you terror, and conſumption, and the burning ague, that ſhall conſume the eyes, and cauſe ſorrow of heart.* And, ver. 25. *I will bring a ſword upon you, that ſhall avenge the quarrel of my covenant.* And in the verſe immediately preceding our text, we have Jehovah declaring, that if they violated his co-

venant, he would make their land like Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboim, brimſtone, ſalt, and burning. In like manner, we have an account of the Iſraelites being puniſhed with three years famine, for attempting to violate the covenant with the Gibeonites, 2 Sam. xxi. at the beginning. After Saul, who would ſeem to have had a principal hand in the wicked attempt, was laid in the duſt; Jehovah would not ſuffer ſuch heinous iniquity to paſs, without manifeſting his righteous indignation.

Another inſtance we find, Jer. xxxiv. 11. where we have an account of the king of Babylon coming againſt Jeruſalem, with a very powerful army. Zedekiah, in the time of his danger, enters into a covenant to proclaim liberty to all their Iſraelitiſh brethren in ſervitude among them; and all the princes and people agree to it. But the king of Babylon, being obliged to withdraw his army from Jeruſalem, to oppoſe the king of Egypt, who now came forth againſt him; Zedekiah, his princes and people, flattering themſelves that the danger was now over; immediately violate the covenant of the Lord. On this account, Jehovah by his prophet, denounces awful judgments, ver. 17. *Behold I proclaim a liberty for you, ſaith the Lord, to the ſword, to the peſtilence, and to the famine;—and I will give the men which have tranſgreſſed my covenant, —The princes of Judah, and the princes of Jeruſalem,—and all the people,—I will even give them into the hand of their enemies, and into the hand of them that ſeek their life; and their dead bodies ſhall be for meat unto the fowls of the heaven, and to the beaſts of the earth.*

We have likewiſe an account of Zedekiah making a covenant with the king of Babylon, Ezek. xvii. It is very probable he durſt not refuſe whatever terms the king of Babylon propoſed; and perhaps, in this manner blinded his conſcience, in violating his covenant-engagements. We ſee, however, what awful judgments were denounced and inflicted, Ver. 15. *Shall he proſper? ſhall he eſcape that doeth ſuch things? or, ſhall he break the covenant, and be delivered?* Ver. 19. *Therefore, thus ſaith the Lord God, as I live, ſurely mine oath that he hath deſpiſed, and my covenant that he hath broken,* EVEN IT *will I recompenſe upon his own head. And I will ſpread my net upon him, and he ſhall be taken in my ſnare; and I will bring him*

to Babylon, and will plead with him there, for his treſpaſs which he hath treſpaſſed againſt me.

Thus you ſee, what heavy judgments the Lord has denounced in his word, againſt covenant-breakers. And if the well known ſtory of Amurath, the valiant Turk, may be credited; it is likewiſe an evidence of the Almighty's indignation againſt covenant-breakers. Amurath had entered into a league, or covenant of peace, with a Chriſtian, or rather an Antichriſtian prince. The prince, on account of a diſpenſation from the Pope, without any juſt cauſe, violated the league; and the armies encountering in the field, the victory ſeemed evidently to declare, in favour of the perfidious prince. Upon which Amurath pulled the league out of his boſom, ſaying, *Thou God of the Chriſtians, if thou art a true God, be avenged on theſe, who, without cauſe, have violated the league made, by calling on thy name.* Upon which the ſcale ſoon turned, and he gained a complete victory. But be this as it will, we have no reaſon to ſuppoſe, that a holy and religious God, would denounce and inflict ſuch heavy judgments for breach of covenant, as theſe recorded in his word, if it were not a ſin, very heinous in his ſight. And if he denounce ſuch awful judgments, for breach of covenants, ſeverals of them between man and man; we have no reaſon to think, that he will overlook, or take not vengeance, for breach of covenants more immediately with himſelf; and if the judgment is long ſuſpended, it may perhaps be the more ſevere at laſt.

It is now time, to make ſome practical improvement on the ſubject. And,

1. From this ſubject we may learn, that when a church or people have come under ſolemn vows and engagements unto the MOST HIGH; this, inſtead of reſtraining their offſpring from reaſonable freedom of enquiry, or judging for themſelves, ought *rather* to excite them unto the laudible exerciſe of examining their principles by the word, that their *faith may not ſtand in the wiſdom of men, but in the power of God.* We ought to conſider diligently the matter of theſe engagements; and if, in any particular, they are contrary to God's revealed will, no engagement whatever can bind us to violate the divine law. But we ought at the ſame time to remember, that as far as they are agreeable to, and founded upon the word

of God, it will not be an eaſy matter to ſhake ourſelves looſe of them.

2. From the ſubject we may learn, that as we ought not to be raſh in *making* vows; ſo neither ought we to be raſh in *rejecting* and *reviling* them. There is ſome reaſon to apprehend, that this is the caſe with many at this day. We ſhould certainly conſider them deliberately, not in a ferment of paſſion, or party fury. *The wrath of man worketh not the righteouſneſs of God*, and is very likely to unfit us, either for judging impartially for ourſelves, or giving others ſuitable direction. If we are raſh in rejecting, and treating our ſolemn engagements with contempt, we may perhaps mount the ſcorner's chair, and daſh ourſelves againſt that awful warning, Iſa. xxviii. 22. *Be not mockers, leſt your bands be made ſtrong.*

3. From the ſubject we may likewiſe learn, that as the word of God, which we have among our hands, lays us under an indiſpenſible divine obligation to cleave to him and his ſervice; we have alſo come under numerous voluntary engagements, to be for him and not for another. *Engagements* in our baptiſm, in the ſacramental ſupper, and the ſolemn vows of our godly anceſtors binding on us. Alas! we little conſider, the inviolable obligation of the divine law; and, therefore, it is nothing ſtrange, although the numerous engagements we have come under, in the ſtrength of grace, to adorn the doctrines of God our Saviour in all things, ſhould have very little influence on us, and be very little regarded by us. But, ſhall we neglect, or violate, ſuch numerous engagements, and be guiltleſs? No; verily, we cannot.

4. From the ſubject, we may alſo be informed, that it is not *merely* our approving, in our profeſſion, of our ſolemn engagements, and their moral obligation, which will free us from the charge of covenant-breaking. If we are as indolent, in the performance of covenant-duties, as any around us, we may juſtly be ranked among covenant-breakers, who are provoking God to viſit with heavy judgments. And *juſtly* may it be ſaid of us, *What do ye more than others?* We have no reaſon to ſay, (as we are ſometimes miſrepreſented), *Stand by yourſelves, for we are holier than you:* But to be deeply humbled, becauſe of the mournful diſagreement between our practice and profeſſion.

5. From what we have ſaid, you may ſee matter of *mourning* before God, on a day of faſting and humiliation. Why, if beſide all our numerous violations of our covenant-engagements as individuals, both in our heart and practice; the generation are diſpoſed to *throw off* all regard to our covenant-engagements, to revile them, and openly avow the violation of them; and repreſent our godly anceſtors, who tranſmitted our valuable privileges to us, at the expence of much blood and treaſure, as guilty of the very worſt branch of Popery; they hereby enter themſelves heirs to the vengeance of heaven, due to the ſhedding the blood of God's ſaints in theſe lands like water. Our worthy anceſtors did not reckon life itſelf too precious for maintaining the glorious Redeemer's headſhip over his chu ch; and other intereſting truths, contained in their confeſſionrand covenants. And they ſtill conſidered adhering to their covenants, as the ſum of the charge againſt them; and renouncing theſe, as giving up their whole cauſe. To repreſent their covenants, therefore, as the worſt branch of Popery, is to maintain that they died like fools; yea, as far as adhering to their covenants was the charge againſt them, that they were deſervedly dragged to ſcaffolds and gibbets. And hence, ſome are not aſhamed to declare, that they took the ſword, and deſervedly periſhed by it. And if the Saviour's reaſoning holds, we may fear, that we are hereby, together with our other iniquities, expoſing ourſelves to Jehovah's indignation, when he makes inquiſition for blood. Luke xi. 47. *Wo unto you; for ye build the ſepulchres of the prophets, and your fathers killed them. Truly, ye bear witneſs, that ye allow of the deeds of your fathers; for they indeed killed them, and ye build their ſepulchres.—That the blood of all the prophets, which was ſhed from the foundation of the world, may be required of this generation.* But here, it may be ſaid, that inſtead of building or ornamenting their ſepulchres, your fathers killed them, and ye tear up their aſhes, murder them afreſh in their reputation; repreſenting them as guilty of the very worſt branch of Popery, and as taking the ſword, and juſtly periſhing by it. *Verily, ye bear witneſs, that ye allow of the deeds of your fathers.*—And it is the principal ſcope of our text, to ſet forth the indignation of the Most High, in a very awful manner, againſt a profeſſing people, ſhould they violate their covenant-engagements unto

him. And is this no matter of mourning, when in his holy providence, he ſeems to be coming out of his place, to plead a controverſy with us?

I may likewiſe notice further, as matter of mourning, that when our covenant-engagements are thus reviled, there may be ſome reaſon to fear, that public confeſſions may next fall a ſacrifice to the humour of the age. I do not mean, that they are all as yet enemies to confeſſions, who are avowed enemies to public covenants; though I cannot well underſtand, how an open enemy to public vows, can be a hearty friend to public confeſſions; for, a public confeſſion acknowledged, includes the very *matter* of a public vow, and only the mere formality wanting. There is, therefore, reaſon to fear, that our Confeſſion may next be diſcarded; if the golden age were arrived, in which it will be as agreeable to the generation, to revile confeſſions, as it is now to revile covenants. And can we think that we have arrived at all this, our public engagements reviled by many, and theſe who acknowledge them, making juſt as little conſcience of the duties contained in them as others, without having provoked the Lord, in righteous judgment, to write bitter things againſt us?

Let me exhort you, therefore, to conſider the ſituation of theſe ſinful and covenant-breaking lands; and how God in his holy providence is contending with us, both as a church and nation. Endeavour to bewail our apoſtacy, plead undeſerved kindneſs for a Redeemer's ſake; that he may return in mercy, and a nation be born as in one day. And when you are thus exerciſed, neglect not to aſk your own heart, as in the ſight of the all-ſeeing God, What hand have I in the general provocation? Let this lead you to conſider the depravity of your nature, the mournful ſource of all the evils which defile the man. Conſider alſo, how numerous and aggravated the actual tranſgreſſions with which you ſtand chargeable, before God and conſcience. Sins innumerable againſt God, your neighbour, and yourſelf; ſins in every thing you do, religious or relative; *In many things we offend all.* Compare heart and life with God's holy law, that you may ſee your tranſgreſſions are innumerable; and with a Saviour's amazing love, that you may ſee, and be affected with your vile ingratitude. Conſider like-

wiſe, that all your multiplied tranſgreſſions are ſo many violations of the ſolemn engagements you are under, to cleave to the ſervice of your God. Be concerned therefore, Chriſtian, to improve the blood of Jeſus as your plea, for the ſaving influences of the Spirit, to enable you to ſtrive againſt, and mortify all ſin: and that he may accompliſh the gracious declaration, Rom. vi. 14. *Sin ſhall not have dominion over you.* Micah vii. 19. *He will ſubdue all our iniquities.*

Let me exhort you likewiſe, to conſider how numerous and important the duties are, which are indiſpenſibly binding upon you; and that for the performance of which, you have no ſtrength of yourſelf. Let this excite you, to apply to the Redeemer's fulneſs, as your furniture for every duty. *It hath pleaſed the Father, that in him ſhould all fulneſs dwell;* and it is for men, for rebel men. Say not then, Chriſtian, How ſhall I perform theſe important duties; for I am weak, deſtitute of ſtrength, altogether inſufficient? Why, the queſtion is not, is *your* ſtrength ſufficient? or is the ſtrength of *grace received* ſufficient? But is the *Redeemer's* ſtrength ſufficient? Is this preſented unto you; is it urged upon you; is it in this, and not even in the ſtrength of grace received, that you are called to be ſtrong? Why complain, Chriſtian, when your Saviour declares that *his grace is ſufficient;* and the promiſe runs, *I will ſtrengthen them in the Lord?* And know for certain, that if you neglect duty, and expect heaven, you make Chriſt the miniſter of ſin: If you attempt duty in your own ſtrength, you practically declare, that the glorious device of heaven, in giving an all-ſufficiency of grace into a Saviour's hand, is ſuperfluous: and if you reſt on your duties, you practically ſay, that he ſhed his blood in vain. Plead then, Chriſtians, that like the diſciples of old, you may *behold his glory,* and *receive out of his fulneſs;* and thereby will you be ſtrengthened for every duty of the Chriſtian life; in all things to adorn the doctrine of God your Saviour, and to live as becomes theſe who are not their own, but bought with a price.

And when the times are troublous, and the aſpect of providence gloomy, let me again exhort you, to apply daily unto the Saviour, who is exalted a Prince to give repentance, and remiſſion of ſin; to preſerve you from ſuffering any ſin unrepented of, to lie upon your conſcience. Be aſſured of it, if

God ſhould ſee meet, in righteous indignation, to viſit with deſolating judgments, ſin unrepented of lying upon the conſcience, will render it very alarming, to meet with your God in the way of his judgments. Be much concerned to live near to your God; ſtrive againſt all ſin: *Seek righteouſneſs, ſeek peace; it may be ye ſhall be hid, in the day of the Lord's anger.*

I now conclude with a ſhort addreſs to ungodly ſinners. And, perhaps, Chriſtleſs ſinner, you approve of public vows and covenants, on which we have been inſiſting; but, alas! what can this avail, while you pour contempt on the everlaſting covenant? Or, perhaps, you deſpiſe theſe covenants we have been deſcribing: but, alas! this is a ſmall matter, in compariſon of your deſpiſing the Saviour, the ſubſtance, ſo to ſpeak, of the new covenant; and therefore ſtiled, *the covenant itſelf.* Why, ſinner, you crucify him afreſh; you *count the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was ſanctified, an unholy thing.* Little, ſinner, do you conſider, that if *Chriſt is deſpiſed, there remains no more ſacrifice for ſin; but a fearful looking for of judgment.* Perhaps you are ſaying, like the ſcornful men, Iſa. xxviii. 15. *We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement;* that the one ſhall never hurt you, nor the other be your infernal priſon. But will this, ſinner, make your heart endure, and your hands ſtrong, when conſcience awakens upon you; while death lays the killing hand on your heart? How dreadful will your ſituation then be, if you perſevere! When you turn your eyes to the heavens, you will ſee nothing but God frowning, Chriſt bleeding, and the flaming ſword turning every way, at the gates of the heavenly paradiſe. When you look backward, nothing to be ſeen, but ſlighted offers of Chriſt; and iniquities innumerable, haunting you like ſo many ghoſts. When you look inward, conſcience tearing, like a bear bereaved of her whelps. When you look forward, the king of terrors aiming the inevitable blow; and hell enlarging itſelf to receive you. And it may be, in your diſtracted apprehenſion, imagining that you already ſee the rolling, blackening ſmoke, and hear the craſhing flames. Where will you then flee for help; where will you leave your glory? It is true, we are not to limit ſovereign grace; but although you ſhould cry to heaven, when you ſtand on the brink of eternity,

if you perſiſt in deſpiſing Chriſt, and godlineſs now; you certainly do what you can, to provoke a holy God to anſwer you in that awful hour, ſaying, *Go to the gods whom ye have ſerved; let them deliver you.*

But know, ſinner, that the Saviour is in your offer, whatever you are, or have been. A gracious God, makes a FREE GIFT of him in the goſpel, unto ſinners indefinitely, unto ſinners without any exception. Iſa. xlii. 6. *And* GIVE THEE *for a covenant of the* PEOPLE: Where you ſee, it is the *people*, without exception. John vi. 32, 33. *My Father* GIVETH YOU *the true bread from heaven. For, the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven.* This was an addreſs of the Saviour, unto as promiſcuous a multitude, as perhaps ever heard the goſpel: but ſays the true and faithful witneſs, *My Father* GIVETH YOU, without any exception, *the true bread from heaven.* On the footing of this gift, and no deſerving of your own, your warrant, ſinner, is undoubted, to receive and reſt on a giſted Chriſt for ſalvation. We are warranted, it is an intereſting branch of our office-work, to proclaim this gift, and to call you in God's great name, to beſeech you by all the joys of heaven, and terrors of eternal wo, to receive a giſted Saviour.

And know, ſinner, that you are not called to reſt on Chriſt, and *continue* in your ſin; but you are called to reſt on him, to *deliver* you from ſin, as well as from the curſe. Perhaps you may think, that you could wiſh for a Saviour to free you from the curſe, when you muſt bid this world adieu; but have no inclination, that He ſhould NOW free you from ſin? But know, ſinner, it is an undivided ſalvation, which you are called to receive; a Saviour to juſtify and ſanctify, to pardon and purify. And if you ſeparate between ſalvation from wrath, and ſalvation from ſin, you ſeparate between theſe things which God has inſeparably connected; and if you perſevere, he will ſeparate you to everlaſting miſery.

We beſeech you therefore, ſinner, to receive a giſted Saviour, and ſalvation from ſin and wrath. For motive, conſider a Saviour's *amazing love;* He bled on the accurſed tree; He intercedes in the upper ſanctuary; He importunes you in the goſpel; yea, He, as it were, weeps over your folly when you reject him.—Conſider alſo, ſinner, your *danger* in deſpiſing an

offered Saviour. The curſe of God reſting on body and ſoul, on all your enjoyments; your very comforts killing, your proſperity a ſnare, your plowing ſin, your prayer an abomination: and, if you perſevere, Tophet your eternal priſon.—Conſider likewiſe your *happineſs*, in receiving a gifted Saviour. The bleſſing of God reſting on your body and ſoul, and on all your enjoyments: your very croſſes a bleſſing; the croſs and the curſe ſeparated entirely; all things working for good; death unſpeakable gain; and a ſeat with Chriſt in his throne your privilege for ever.——Will you pour contempt on all this kindneſs of heaven; will you crucify to yourſelves the ſon of God afreſh; will you thus requite him, O fooliſh people and unwiſe!

But perhaps, ſome may ſay, I cannot receive an offered Saviour; I can no more believe, than I can do and live. It is true, ſinner, of yourſelf you cannot; nor does the goſpel-offer imply, that you can believe of yourſelf. It ſhews you what you are warranted to do; what it is your indiſpenſible duty to do, that you are ruined for ever if you do not, where there is ſtrength provided for you, and is itſelf a principal mean of heaven's appointment, for imparting ſtrength unto you. What then remains, but that you ſhould eſſay to reſt on a gifted Chriſt for ſalvation; not as a thing which you CAN DO, but as a thing which you CANNOT DO of yourſelf: at the ſame time pleading with a gracious God, that, for Chriſt's ſake, he may accompliſh his own declaration, Phil. i. 29. *To you it is given, on behalf of Chriſt, to believe on him*, and then will you reſt on him to purpoſe.—Perhaps you may ſtill object, that you do not underſtand what it means, to eſſay a thing, as what you CANNOT DO yourſelf. I anſwer, the man with the withered arm, attempted to ſtretch it out, he knew very well, that it was what he could not do; but expected the Saviour who had commanded him, to ſtrengthen him. Go ye, and do likewiſe; and plead the Saviour's own promiſe, Zech. xii. 10. *They* SHALL LOOK *upon me whom they have pierced.*

Be aſſured of it, ſinner, that life and death, bleſſing and curſing, are ſet before you. On the one hand, a Saviour, and vital godlineſs, every bleſſing of grace here, and a crown of glory hereafter, which will never fade. On the other hand, the mean, the unmanly, the ſordid pleaſures of ſin and ſenſe

here; and eternal burnings hereafter. And why, ſinner, ſo fooliſh, as to prefer death and the curſe, to life and the bleſſing! I am very certain, if you ſaw any of your fellow-creatures acting ſuch a part, in things temporal, as you do in things ſpiritual, you would reckon them fools, or madmen: but you are ſurely unſpeakably more infatuated, to act ſuch a part, in matters of eternal importance. Plead therefore, ſinner, that it may pleaſe God to reveal his Son in you, to unite you unto him, and then will you receive and reſt on him for ſalvation; and be enabled, by renewed communications of grace from him, to make his blood your plea, his word your rule, and his fulneſs your ſupply, for every branch of a life of godlineſs here, till you are, in due time, rendered meet for the inheritance of the ſaints in light.

The END *of the* SERMON.

BRITISH MUSEUM 25 SP 38

ANIMADVERSIONS

ON

RELIEF PUBLICATIONS,

ESPECIALLY THESE EMITTED BY

The Rev. PATRICK HUTCHISON;

PARTICULARLY

HIS NUMEROUS ATTACKS

ON

SECESSION PRINCIPLES.

SUFFER ME THAT I MAY SPEAK; AND AFTER THAT I HAVE SPOKEN, MOCK ON. JOB xxi. 3.

ANIMADVERSIONS, &c.

SECT. I.

Containing Animadverſions on Mr. Hutchiſon's arguments againſt Covenanting, in his Diſſertation, &c.

SINCE the preceding ſermons were delivered, Mr. H——n has emitted another performance; in which he enveighs againſt *public covenanting*, at great length. And though his particulars are numerous, I ſhall return an anſwer to each of them; and ſhall endeavour, as much as poſſible, to avoid fatiguing the attention of the reader with prolixity. I ſhall, therefore, juſt mention every one of his arguments, and anſwer each of them as ſhortly as I can.

He introduces himſelf to the ſubject of covenanting, by informing his reader, that from the knowledge he has of the complexion and character of Seceders; he expects nothing from them, but a deluge of *reproach* and *ſlander*. The reader may judge, if Seceders can well exceed the example, Mr. H——n has ſet before them on this point. But, ſays he, '*I truſt in God, I ſhall be enabled to undervalue and deſpiſe.*' A ſtrange ſort of truſt! It would have reſembled more the character of our divine Maſter, to have ſaid, that he truſted to be enabled to ſay, *Father, forgive them.*—He adds, page 86, '*Nor do I eſteem it worth my pains, to write a ſingle ſentence for the inſtruction of thoſe who hate to be inſtructed.*' The wiſeſt of princes, that ever filled a throne, and directed by the Spirit of inſpiration, did not think it below his dignity, to write for the *inſtruction of thoſe who hated knowledge*, Prov. i. 22. Nay, if he is not convinced, that we have all *ſinned unto death*, he ſhould not think his labour ill-beſtowed, in writing for our

inſtruction, and praying that his inſtruction may be bleſſed.—He expreſſes his hope, page 26, '*That God will, in due time, convince us*,' but will not write a ſingle ſentence for our inſtruction. It is not ſeparate communion, (as Chriſtians will have different ſentiments, while they are in this imperfect ſtate); but rancour and bitterneſs, at all who differ from us, which worms out the very life of catholic love.

Before he proceeds to his particular arguments againſt covenanting, he lays it down as a maxim, or general poſition, page 83. '*All that was poſitive, and of arbitrary appointment, under the Old Teſtament, having its foundation in the* WILL, *and not in the* NATURE *of God, is abrogated under the New-Teſtament diſpenſation.*' As this is a general poſition, and runs through a great part of his reaſoning, it certainly ſhould have been ſupported, with ſomething more ſatisfactory, than bare aſſertion. A ſeventh part of our time, dedicated to the ſervice of God, is not founded in the nature, but in the will of God; and binding to the end of the world. He allows, that its being the ſeventh day, was poſitive; and therefore might be changed to the firſt: But, its being one day in ſeven, was poſitive; as well as its being the ſeventh day. That a portion of our time ſhould be ſet apart, for the worſhip and ſervice of God, is evidently founded in his nature: that it ſhould be a ſeventh part of it, is as evidently founded in his will. God might have required a *fifth*, or a *ſixth*, as well as a *ſeventh* part of our time, had it ſo ſeemed good in his ſight. If this leading maxim is juſt, Chriſtians are under no obligation to *ſanctify* one day in ſeven unto the Lord.

The *moral law* of God is certainly founded in his nature; but the COVENANT-FORM of it, is as certainly poſitive, or founded in his will. The glorious Creator was under no neceſſity of nature, to tranſact with innocent man, in the way of a covenant, more than with innocent angels; or to deliver his law to him, in the form of a covenant. But, is the law of God, in its covenant-form, abrogated under the New Teſtament? It is true, the godly are delivered from it, in its covenant-form; and thereby their obligations to obey it, as a rule of life, are exceedingly ſtrengthened: but, ſo were the godly under the Old Teſtament. Ungodly ſinners were under the law as a covenant, during the Old-Teſtament diſpenſation;

and ſo are they ſtill. But, if this poſition is ſolid, the law, in its covenant-form, is abrogated unto all the hearers of the goſpel.

He may likewiſe prove, if he pleaſes, that the appointment of the different *degrees of kindred*, within which it was unlawful to marry, under the Old Teſtament, was founded in the nature, and not in the will of God. If he cannot, he muſt allow, that this alſo is abrogated; and that Chriſtians have no concern to regard it.—To adore the perfections of God, and expreſs our thankfulneſs for his mercies, is moral: But, to do this by ſinging the poetical parts of ſcripture, with certain modulations of the voice, appears to me to be poſitive. Are Chriſtians, therefore, to deſiſt from this exerciſe, as being abrogated under the goſpel?—To be humbled before God on account of our ſins, is certainly moral: But abſtinence from food, during the time ſet apart for this exerciſe, as far as may be done without injuring bodily health, is poſitive; and is not abrogated under the goſpel.——From theſe, and ſuch like particulars, it is evident, that he rears his ſuperſtructure on a foundation of ſand. Although any particular command in the Old Teſtament, is not founded in the nature, but in the will of God; it does not follow, that it is no more binding, unleſs it is either expreſly abrogated, or we can ſee the declared end and deſign of it evidently ceaſed. And therefore, although covenanting were a poſitive command, which yet remains to be proved, it does not follow, that it is unlawful, for it is not expreſly abrogated; and the reaſons aſſigned by Mr. H——n himſelf, may be as forcible under the New Teſtament, as the Old; as we may ſee afterward. Nor is it a ſufficient proof of a duty being poſitive, that it is enjoined in a poſitive manner; for it may be ſo enjoined, while it is only an explication of the extent of one, or other, of the commands of the moral law. Covenanting might have been enjoined in a poſitive manner at firſt, which, by the by, it was not; and at the ſame time, only an explication of the extent of the firſt commandment. In a word, every thing *ceremonial* is abrogated; and we can ſee, that the declared deſign of it is no more: Every thing *judicial*, which is not founded in the *moral law*, is in like manner abrogated: But, *covenanting* is neither ceremonial, nor judicial; and therefore, is not *abrogated*, but of *perpetual obligation*.

In page 86, we have his plan of procedure laid down, in ſix general branches; and on each of theſe, we have a number of particular obſervations. And as I could wiſh my reader to ſee every one of his arguments; I ſhall tranſcribe the general branches, and particular obſervations, and anſwer as ſhortly as I can. His firſt general branch is as follows.

I. '*I ſhall offer a few Obſervations, for aſcertaining and illuſtrating the* NATURE *of* JEWISH *covenanting.*' His particular obſervations on this, are the following.

OBSERV. 1. '*That national covenanting, in Iſrael, was approven of by God.*' This, he alledges, has been uſed by ſome as an argument, for the morality of covenanting. Who they are, I know not; I freely own, it is no concluſive one.

2. '*It is argued, that the ſwearing of the Iſraelitiſh covenant was a moral duty, becauſe an oath is a* PART *of the worſhip of God.*' That an oath is a part of God's worſhip, he grants; but maintains, that the national covenant of Iſrael, was a *poſitive* inſtitution. But, although this had been the caſe, we have a right to demand a proof that it is abrogated: for one day in ſeven, ſet apart for the worſhip of God, is poſitive; and binding ſtill. We muſt, however, attend unto his arguments, that it was poſitive.

3. '*As an evidence, that the national covenant of Iſrael was a poſitive inſtitution,—I obſerve, that* CORPORAL *pains entered into the very matter of it.*' I have anſwered this already in the ſermons, p. 14, 15.—If their covenanting was a moral duty, it behoved to include an engagement to obey whatever God enjoined: And as God had enjoined them to puniſh idolaters, it behoved to include an engagement to this, even although it had not been expreſſy mentioned. And if its including ceremonial, and judicial duties, muſt be a proof that it was poſitive; its including every moral duty, muſt alſo be a proof that it was moral, and the moral duty muſt continue, although the ceremony is evaniſhed. Nay, the reader may ſee, by conſulting Deut. iv. 13. that moral duties are the firſt, and principal; and ceremonial and judicial duties, only annexed, as an appendage ſuited to that diſpenſation; and expreſſive of the manner in which the worſhip of God, which is moral,

was to be performed.—On this particular, in p. 88. after he has mentioned ſome injunctions under the Old Teſtament, which are expreſly reverſed under the New, he concludes that therefore they were not moral: But, if he means to apply this to covenanting, his argument is evidently lame, till he has proved, that covenanting is expreſly reverſed, which he has not as yet attempted.

4. —— '*I obſerve, that it was enjoined to that people alone;* '*—But this covenant was not appointed to be made with the* '*Gentile nations, but only with the Iſraelitiſh nations; and,* '*therefore, its obligation could extend no farther than that na-* '*tion, with whom it was made.*' It is not very eaſy to me, at leaſt, to underſtand the force of this argument; or what it is I am to anſwer. It would ſeem to import, that nothing is a moral duty, which Jehovah did not, by ſome prophet, or lawgiver, enjoin upon the Gentile nations. This, I apprehend, would conſiderably diminiſh the number of moral duties. No man, ſo far as I know, ever imagined that the Jewiſh covenants were binding on the Heathen, who had no connection with them; or binding on us, unleſs by way of example. Although covenanting is a moral duty, it will never follow, that the covenants of a particular people are binding on the whole world. It will never be a proof, that our covenants, in theſe lands, are not moral; becauſe they are not binding on the ſavages in the wilds of America.—This is the ſum of the argument, as it is laid. But perhaps, his meaning is, that if covenanting among the Jews was moral; then the duty of covenanting was binding on the Heathen, becauſe moral duties are binding on all. I anſwer; If every moral duty is diſcoverable by the light of nature; the concluſion is juſt, that if covenanting is moral, it is a duty binding on the Heathen. But, if there may be moral duties, which the light of nature cannot diſcover, and the Heathen deſtitute of any particular revelation of them; I apprehend it will not be alledged, that ſuch duties are binding on them: And that covenanting is a duty, which nature's light cannot diſcover, will perhaps be very readily granted; and therefore, what our author means by this argument, I know not.

He adds, for further illuſtration of this particular; '*It me-* '*rits attention, that the Iſraelites are threatened with particu-*

'*lar puniſhments, if they did not obſerve that oath;—but theſe* '*puniſhments reſpected them only;—Had the obligation of that* '*national oath extended to the Gentile nation, the threatening* '*annexed to the violation of it, would have extended to them* '*alſo.*' If by particular puniſhments he means, the Jews being carried out of their native land; this was not peculiar to them, for it was the uſual practice of conquerors at that time, to carry theſe whom they vanquiſhed, out of their native country, in order to prevent them from throwing off their yoke. And when the Jews were carried captive, others were tranſported from their native country to Canaan. And it is true, the Heathen were not threatened with any puniſhment whatever, for the violation of the Jewiſh covenants. But, what attention does it merit in this controverſy? That the Heathen are not threatened with puniſhment, for the violation of theſe covenants, can be no proof that they were not moral; unleſs nothing be moral, which the Heathen are not threatened with puniſhment for neglecting. God has delivered his holy word to his church, in every age; but the Heathen are not threatened with puniſhment for the violation of it, except it may be ſuch of them, as had acceſs to know it, but would not: They will not be judged by it, nor puniſhed for the violation of it; but for the violation of the law and light of nature. Rom. ii. 12. *For as many as have ſinned without law, ſhall alſo periſh without law; and as many as have ſinned in the law, ſhall be judged by the law.* We have the word of God frequently limited to eſſentials, and fundamentals; but here we have the whole of it cut off from being moral. According to our author's argument, the Heathen muſt be threatened with puniſhment for the neglect of every thing moral: But, they are not threatened; they will not be judged by, nor puniſhed for the violation of the word of God.—I might aſk, Was it a moral duty binding on the Jews, to believe on their promiſed Meſſiah? According to this argument, it was not; for the Heathen are not threatened with puniſhment for the neglect of it.—This ſhews the fallacy of Mr. H——n's aſſertion, on this particular part, '*Moral duties are equally obligatory on all men, at all* '*times, in all places, and in all conditions.*' This may be true of ſuch moral duties, as nature's light can diſcover, or when God has revealed them: But when neither of theſe are

the caſe, they cannot be binding. And with reſpect to occaſional duties, this aſſertion plainly imports, that alms-giving, is as obligatory on the beggar, as on the prince: For, it is a moral duty; and, therefore, if the aſſertion is juſt, it is *equally binding* on men, in *all conditions*.

Theſe are all his arguments to prove, that the Jewiſh covenants were a *poſitive* inſtitution. '*Corporal pains entered into* '*the matter of them.*' I anſwer; If this is a proof they were poſitive, *moral duties* being the principal matter of them, muſt be a ſtronger proof that they were moral.—'*They were not* '*binding on the Gentile nations.*' I anſwer; If this is a proof they were not moral, to believe on the promiſed Meſſiah was not moral; for this was not binding on the Gentile nations, till he was revealed unto them.—'*The heathens are not threa-* '*tened with puniſhment for the violation of them.*' I anſwer; They are not threatened with puniſhment, for the violation of the written word; but it does not follow, that it is not moral. ——I aſk the Reader, if there is ſo much as a ſhadow of a proof in all this?

5. '*This covenant made with the Iſraelites and their poſterity,* '*in the land of Moab, was not obligatory on them, or their po-* '*ſterity, becauſe they ſwore it; but becauſe, by divine autho-* '*rity, this covenant was appointed to extend its obligation to* '*the Iſraelites, in all their generations.*' This argument does not ſeem to reſpect the *morality*, but the *obligation* of theſe covenants on poſterity. It is a matter of far leſs moment to me, in what particular manner it is that covenants are binding, if the word of God declares they are ſo. And although Mr. H——n aſſerts, that Moſes declaring *the covenant was made with him, who was not there before the Lord*, was only a declaration with reſpect to that covenant in particular: it is only his own aſſertion; and I have juſt as good a right to aſſert, that it was a declaration, that public vows and covenants in general, when they are agreeable to the word of God, are binding upon the lateſt poſterity. Beſides, he knows, no doubt, this ſcripture will admit, and has a different explication of it given, by authors of eſtabliſhed character: And other arguments are not wanting, to ſhew that public covenants are binding on poſterity *. He aſſerts, on this particular, that if it had

* See the Sermons, p. 19,—25.

not been 'made a ſtanding law in that commonwealth, by di-
'vine appointment, it would have been a piece of will-worſhip,
'in their poſterity, to have ſworn any national covenant after-
'ward.' But this is evidently begging the queſtion, or taking it for granted, that it is not a moral duty; although, as yet, he has ſcarcely produced the appearance of an argument. I have already ſhewn, I hope, to the ſatisfaction of the unprejudiced, that covenanting is a moral duty *: and therefore, Moſes declaring, that *it was made with him, who was not there before the Lord*, could not conſtitute its obligation; for moral duties are binding in themſelves, as ſoon as they are revealed: and this was only a declaration of its obligation. Nor could it poſſibly be a piece of will-worſhip to perform a moral duty, when God in his providence called them thereto. He likewiſe ſeems to inſinuate, on this particular, that it was a *ſtanding ordinance*, not an *occaſional duty*: This I have anſwered at ſome length already †.

6. His ſixth particular, aſſigns the reaſons, why the Lord appointed this poſitive duty among the Iſraelites. 'To preſerve
'the knowledge of the true God, and his ſupreme authority and
'worſhip in the world, amidſt that mournful darkneſs, &c.—
'The proneneſs too of the Iſraelites, to deviate from his inſti-
'tuted ſyſtem of government;—the Jews, a refractory people,
'and prone to idolatry.' But is there not much mournful darkneſs in the world ſtill? I am certain, if we credit Mr. H——n's account, when deſcanting on the different articles of our national covenant, and ſolemn league, the moſt part of the generation are blind as moles, and they muſt be as unteachable; for they can ſwear little or nothing in judgment, after all the diligence that their miniſters can poſſibly exerciſe. And mankind are, perhaps, juſt as prone to deviate from divine inſtitutions now, as they were four thouſand years ago: we may frequently ſee undeniable evidences of it. And depraved nature will ſtill be refractory, and prone to violate the ſecond commandment. He appears to me, on this particular, rather to aſſign reaſons, why covenanting ſhould be a binding duty ſtill. But as it is not very material, I ſhall not inſiſt.

I may obſerve, however, that in page 27. he aſſerts, that 'the
'Iſraelitiſh commonwealth was an abſolute monarchy, governed

* See the Sermons, p. 10,—17. † See the Sermons, p. 25,—33.

'*by the ſole authority of Meſſiah the Prince.*' On this ſixth particular he aſſerts, that '*Jehovah—had a right to require an 'oath of allegiance to himſelf, as the great head of that theo-'cracy, from all the members of that commonwealth, as any 'civil magiſtrate has a right to require an oath of allegiance 'from his ſubjects.*' It would have been very agreeable, if our author had been more explicit on this myſterious point. If the Jewiſh covenants were an oath of allegiance to Meſſiah, as the Prince of their monarchy, or to Jehovah as the head of the theocracy, and civil magiſtrate, as their covenants included an engagement to every duty which God required, whether reſpecting his own worſhip, or their relative duties to one another; this would ſeem to import, that they engaged to perform every duty, religious and relative, in obedience to Meſſiah, as *Prince* of the monarchy, or Jehovah as the *head* of the theocracy. In whatever *character* they conſidered the MOST HIGH, in ſwearing theſe covenants, they certainly engaged to perform all the duties contained in them, as acts of obedience to him, in that very *character*. I can form ſome conception of acts of devotion and other duties, performed in obedience to Jehovah, as a reconciled God through Chriſt, or in obedience to Meſſiah, as the eternal Son of God; but devotion, and other duties, performed as acts of obedience to Jehovah, as *Head* of a theocracy, or *civil magiſtrate*; or to Meſſiah, as *Prince* of an abſolute monarchy, I underſtand not. It deſerves attention, in my view at leaſt, that in the firſt ſwearing of theſe covenants, the ten commandments, which were the ſubſtance of their covenant engagements, and therefore ſtiled *the covenant itſelf*, were introduced or prefaced thus, *I am the Lord thy God*: had their covenants been ſuch an oath of allegiance as is aſſerted, it is natural to think, the preface would have run thus; 'I am 'Jehovah, the great head of your theocracy, and civil magi-'ſtrate; or, I am Meſſiah, the Prince of your abſolute mo-'narchy;' in this manner, directing them to the object of worſhip, in that character in which they were to adore, and perform every duty as an act of obedience to him.—But I paſs this, as it is a kind of worſhip I do not underſtand, till Mr. H——n is more explicit.

7. '*I obſerve, that vowing, in the Old Teſtament, had no*

'*connection with the national covenant of Iſrael, nor was it* '*a duty of the moral law.*' Be this as it will, his arguments are no proof, that vowing is not a moral duty. Deut. xxiii. from verſe 21. is adduced, as a proof; '*If thou forbear to* '*vow, it ſhall be no ſin in thee.*' Now, if this is a proof, that vowing was not a *moral duty*; it is equally a proof that it was not a *poſitive* duty: for, if vowing was *even* a poſitive duty, it was certainly ſinful to neglect the poſitive command of God. This is exceedingly evident: and therefore divines very juſtly obſerve, that the paſſage reſpects vowing in things which were *indifferent*, which the word of God did not expreſly require; and therefore they might either vow or forbear. Mr. H——n's argument then, is this: 'It was no ſin to refrain 'from vowing, in ſuch things as the word of God did not 'expreſly require; therefore, vowing is not a moral duty.' They may trace the connection who can.

But he adds, from the xxxth chapter of the book of Numbers, '*It is evident to a demonſtration, that vows made, even* '*unto the Lord himſelf, are not moral duties.*' The demonſtration is this: If a virgin in her father's houſe, or a married woman, ſhould vow, perhaps to give ſomething or other to the ſervice of the ſanctuary; why, it was not their own; they had no right to diſpoſe of it; it was the property of the father, or the huſband: and, therefore, if the father, or huſband, apprehended, that the daughter, or ſpouſe, had vowed to a greater extent than his circumſtances would admit, he might lawfully retain his property. And ſeveral other circumſtances are mentioned, by commentators, both Jewiſh and Chriſtian. That this is the ſenſe of the paſſage, is abundantly plain; for, we are told expreſly, that the vow of a widow, or of one that was divorced, was every way as binding, as the vow of a father or huſband; becauſe her property was at her own diſpoſal. His argument then is this: If I vow to give away that which I have no right to diſpoſe of, my vow can be of no force, without the conſent of the owner; for he has a right to retain his own property: therefore, vowing cannot be a moral duty.—That this ſhould paſs for a demonſtration is ſomewhat ſtrange!

That vowing was a duty, under the Old-Teſtament diſpenſation, cannot be denied; when Jehovah gave them ſo many directions concerning the performance of it. And if it was not

moral, it behoved to be *poſitive;* and according to our author's leading poſition, it is abrogated under the New Teſtament: and the vows of miniſters at their ordination, and of parents in the baptiſm of their children, are will-worſhip; an abomination in the Lord's ſight. But there is not the remoteſt appearance of vowing being a poſitive command. The firſt we read of is Jacob's vow at Bethel; but no poſitive command, which we hear of, was then given concerning it. Jacob ſeems to have been convinced, that it was a moral duty, and accordingly performed it: Jehovah approved; *I am the God of Bethel, where thou—vowedſt the vow.* Nor have we any poſitive command, as far as I remember, in all the directions which were given to Iſrael concerning it; but ſtill mentioned as a duty ſuppoſed, being included in the moral law. And if it was poſitive, we could wiſh to ſee the poſitive appointment of it. And if one perſon might vow to ſerve God, as Jacob did; why may not a family, a congregation, or a church in general? We have an account of *all Iſrael vowing unto the Lord*, Numb. xxi. 2. And although it may be true, that the Jewiſh covenants are not called *vows*, but *oaths;* it does not follow, that vowing had no connection with theſe covenants. This will clearly appear, if we conſider what vowing is. A vow is a ſolemn promiſe made to God, in the ſtrength of his grace, to be, or to do what is incumbent upon the perſon vowing; and may be extended to things indifferent, when the perſon is convinced it is his duty. Now, what were the national covenants of Iſrael, but a national vow, which they came under; or a ſolemn promiſe which they made unto the Lord, in the ſtrength of his grace, to walk in his ways? ſo that their covenanting was the very *matter* and *ſubſtance* of a national vow. But as this vow uſually, if not always, had an oath, and ſometimes a curſe appended; it is from this circumſtance ſtiled an *oath*. But it does not follow from this, that the covenants did not include a vow, or that a vow does not conſtitute a public covenant, or that it is unlawful to covenant in this manner. Nay, Mr. H——n afterward allows of covenants, without either vow or oath.—The Reader has now ſeen his firſt ſeries of arguments; and he may judge for himſelf, what is yet proved. I proceed to his ſecond general branch.

II. 'The ſecond thing propoſed, was to conſider the Old-'Teſtament predictions, which are urged in ſupport of New-'Teſtament ſwearing of religious oaths, and to fix their genuine 'ſenſe and meaning.' I have no occaſion to enlarge in anſwering this branch, becauſe I have not urged Old-Teſtament predictions as an argument for covenanting; not from any apprehenſion of its weakneſs, but becauſe I propoſed to confine myſelf to the *morality* of the duty. His principal evaſion, concerning Old-Teſtament predictions, is this. 'They are not to 'be underſtood in a literal, but in a figurative ſenſe;—expreſ-'ſing the ſpiritual worſhip of the New Teſtament, in language 'peculiar to the worſhip of the Old Teſtament.' And to explain one clauſe of a verſe *literally*, and the very next clauſe *myſtically*, he affirms, is a GROSS ABUSE, ABSURD, PERVERSION, CONFUSED, SENSELESS.—He is quite maſter of this ſort of argumentation.

The Reader may conſult the paſſage he quotes, Iſa. xix. 21. *And the Lord ſhall be known to Egypt, and the Egyptians ſhall know the Lord in that day.* This is not the figurative language of the Old Teſtament, but plain and unembelliſhed; like the ſimplicity of the New. *This is life eternal to know thee, the only true God* *. But the very next clauſe is evidently figurative; 'and ſhall do ſacrifice and oblation. He quotes Iſa. ii. 2. as a ſpecimen. Had he caſt his eye on the following verſe, he might have ſeen an evident proof, that one clauſe may be underſtood in a *figurative*, and the very next in a *literal* ſenſe. *And many people ſhall go and ſay, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord*, &c. This is evidently figurative; but the very next clauſe is as evidently literal: *And he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths.* The reader may conſult Iſa. ix. where he will ſee, that the whole of the 5th verſe is highly figurative: but does it follow that the 6th is figurative alſo? *For unto us a child is born*, &c. It were eaſy to give numerous inſtances; but it ſerves no purpoſe: for his aſſertion, that to explain one clauſe literally, and the next figuratively, is a groſs abuſe, &c. is entirely groundleſs. He tells us, if it were allowed, that 'the Popiſh doctors 'will certainly prove the doctrine of tranſubſtantiation from

* John xvii. 3.

'*ſcripture*,' and quotes our Lord's words, when inſtituting the ſacrament of the ſupper; *This is my body, this is my blood*. Such bitter reflections ſhould always be well-founded. If his aſſertion is allowed, that to explain one clauſe literally, and the next figuratively, or myſtically, is a groſs abuſe, the doctrine of tranſubſtantiation is eſtabliſhed, beyond all poſſibility of contradiction, in the very text he quotes. And it is ſtrange, that the fallacy of his own aſſertion, did not ſtare him in the face, whenever this text came into his mind, Matth. xxvi. 26. *And, as they were eating, Jeſus took bread, and brake it, and gave it to the diſciples; and ſaid, Take, eat.* All this is certainly to be underſtood in a literal ſenſe: but the very next clauſe, *This is my body*, is evidently to be underſtood in a figurative ſenſe. It does not mean, that it was his body *literally*, according to the Popiſh doctrine; but that it was a ſacramental *ſign*, and *ſymbol* of his body, or human nature. But according to our author's rule of expoſition, when the preceding clauſe is undeniably *literal*; *This is my body*, muſt be *literal* alſo: This is tranſubſtantiation with a witneſs! But, according to our author's maxim, when the former clauſe is evidently literal, to affirm that, *This is my body*, is figurative, is a groſs abuſe, perverſion of ſcripture, abſurd, a confuſed, and ſenſeleſs commentary.——I queſtion, if all Bellarmine's folios can produce ſuch a demonſtrative proof of tranſubſtantiation. I have no occaſion to inſiſt further on this, for the fallacy of his diſtinction concerning *literal* and *figurative* being detected; the very firſt Old-Teſtament prediction he mentions, ſtands quite untouched. I proceed to his third general branch,

III. '*To enquire, whether this is a duty revealed under the New Teſtament itſelf.*' On this branch he propoſes, to mention the paſſages of the New Teſtament, which have been urged as a proof of covenanting, and fix the true meaning of them. I do not pretend, to be very well acquainted with all the paſſages which have been urged. I can eaſily ſee, however, that there is a very material difference, between a text being urged us a proof of ſome particular branch of the argument, and being urged as a proof of covenanting in general. And, that it may be a very eaſy matter, for a man to hold up his opponent to deriſion, by repreſenting him as urging this or the

other ſcripture text, as a proof of covenanting in general, when he only urged it, and perhaps very pertinently, as a proof of ſome particular *branch* of the argument. And if all the texts Mr. H——n mentions, have been urged to prove covenanting in general; I own, that, in my view, they have been miſunderſtood.

The text which is principally urged, is 2 Cor. viii. 5. *And this they did, not as we hoped, but firſt gave their ownſelves to the Lord, and afterward to us, by the will of God.* I mean, not to affirm poſitively, that this was a public vow, or covenant, as the apoſtle does not: but it appears to me very probable that it was. It behoved to be ſome religious duty certainly: and the apoſtle has occaſion, to mention other religious duties frequently; but we never find him expreſs himſelf in this manner concerning any of them, *They firſt gave their ownſelves unto the Lord.* Nor does Mr. H——n, as he propoſed, pretend to fix the true meaning of it. He tells us of two other ways, a profeſſion of the goſpel; and baptiſm and the Lord's ſupper: and that in one, or both of theſe ways, they might be ſaid to *give themſelves to the Lord.* Well, ſuppoſe it was by a *profeſſion* of the goſpel: they had, certainly, before this time, embraced the ſpiritual worſhip of the goſpel, and profeſſed their faith in Chriſt; and would the apoſtle ever affirm, that he did not hope, that they would continue to profeſs their faith in Chriſt? But, perhaps, it was in *baptiſm.* Why, we may reaſonably ſuppoſe, that the greater part of them were baptized already: and the apoſtle could not aſſert, concerning them in the general, that they gave themſelves to the Lord in this manner; without ſuppoſing them to be rebaptized. It remains then, that it was in the *Lord's ſupper.*

It is evident, however, that this ordinance was obſerved, at leaſt, pretty frequently, in the church at that time: And, why then ſhould the apoſtle affirm, that he did not hope, that they would celebrate that ordinance, before their donation was made up? The apoſtle evidently means, that they were more forward in giving their charity, than he expected: but the leſs forward he apprehended they would be, he had certainly the more reaſon to think, that they would celebrate the ſupper before it. If this ordinance were intended, the apoſtle's reaſoning would rather have run thus; this they did, not as we

hoped; for they did not even tarry, till they had celebrated the Lord's ſupper. It is hard to aſſign a reaſon, why the apoſtle ſhould ſay; that he did not hope, that they would celebrate the Lord's ſupper. But, ſuppoſing it was a public vow, which is not an ordinary ſtated duty, the difficulty at once evaniſhes. Beſides, the apoſtle has occaſion to mention the celebration of the ſupper, again and again; but he never expreſſes himſelf in this manner concerning it.

From theſe conſiderations, it is very improbable, that it was either of the two ways mentioned by our author; and, therefore, the argument for covenanting from this text, is not in the leaſt affected by any thing he has advanced. And, as this is materially the ſame, with ſome of his after particulars, I ſhall proceed to his fourth general branch, which is,

IV. '*To offer a variety of arguments againſt the* MORALITY '*of ſuch oaths; or to prove, that they are no moral duty.*' As this ſeems to be his principal branch, I ſhall conſider every argument, that the reader may ſee I am not convinced, that they are as unanſwerable as has been alledged.

ARG. 1. '*The ſwearing of ſuch oaths, in a ſocial capacity,* '*was never obſerved among the* PROFESSORS *of the true religion,* '*in any age of the world, before the conſtitution of the Jewiſh* '*church:—before the flood,—good men—would certainly have* '*performed it.*'

This argument is ſomething like a drowning man graſping at weeds, or wreck, or whatever comes nigh him. It is very evident, the account is exceeding ſhort, which we have of the ages before the flood. 'They offered ſacrifice; they began to 'call on the name of the Lord; they were juſt, and walked 'with God *.' Now, when all the account we have of religious duties, for two thouſand years, may be ſummed up in a ſingle ſentence: can any thing well be leſs concluſive, than to alledge, that this or that, is not a moral duty, becauſe it is not particularly mentioned? Farther, commentators ſeem to be at a loſs, to fix the real meaning of *men beginning to call on the name of the Lord*, becauſe it is hard to think, that they had not before this time called upon him, *even* in public aſſem-

* Gen. iv. 3, 4, 5, 26. v. 22, 24. vi. 9.

blies. And, therefore, ſome of them obſerve, that the words may be rendered, *They began to call themſelves by the name of the Lord:* And that they did ſo, in oppoſition unto Cain's idolatrous race; and they might do ſo, by a public vow, as the Iſraelites did in oppoſition to idolatry in general. I do not mean, that there is much weight in this; but juſt as much, as in that which it is intended to anſwer. The obſervation of the Sabbath, is certainly a moral duty; but if our Author's argument has any force, it is not ſo: For, where have we the obſervation of it expreſly mentioned, before the conſtitution of the Jewiſh church?—His firſt argument then is loaded with two evident abſurdities. 1. That when all the account we have of religious duties for two thouſand years, may be ſummed up, in a ſentence or two, nothing can be a moral duty, which is not expreſly mentioned. 2. That the obſervation of the Sabbath, is not a moral duty.

ARG. 2. '*The ſwearing of religious oaths cannot be a moral* '*duty, becauſe it was never obſerved by the holy* JESUS *himſelf.*'

I grant we have no account of his obſerving it: But, if this argument proves any thing, it will prove too much; namely, that it was neither ceremonial, judicial, nor moral; or, that it was neither poſitive, nor moral; for the Saviour *fulfilled all righteouſneſs*, ceremonial, judicial, or moral: and he is generally thought to have once wrought a miracle, in order to perform a poſitive duty.—I obſerve, further, that in page 90. Mr. H——n aſſerts, that '*this covenant was appointed to ex-*'*tend its obligation to the Iſraelites in all their generations.*' In page 91. '*Eſtabliſhed to be a ſtanding ordinance in Iſrael.*' And page 95. '*Was aboliſhed at the death of Chriſt.*' From theſe expreſſions, it is very plain, that Mr. H——n maintains, covenanting was an ordinary ſtated duty, binding until the death of Chriſt. The reader may judge, if this is not a direct attack upon the *perfection* of the Redeemer's obedience: An ordinary ſtanding duty, which was not abrogated till his death; but he *never* performed it.—I add, he will not probably aſſert, that the duties binding on huſbands, and parents, are not moral: But, did the Saviour ever perform them? Nay, nor perhaps the duties of a brother-german; for the word rendered *brother* in ſcripture, is not confined to a brother-german:

and many have queſtioned, if ever the Saviour had any ſuch. —If this argument of our author is ſolid, either covenanting was no duty at all, neither moral nor poſitive; or the Saviour's obedience was imperfect; and the duty incumbent on huſbands, parents, and brothers, are not moral duties. — But the plain anſwer to his argument is this: Altho' covenanting is a *moral duty*, it is not a *ſtated*, but an *occaſional* duty; called for only on ſome particular emergencies: and as the Saviour never performed it, we may well conclude, that there was no call to it, while he tabernacled with men upon earth; and, therefore, to perform it, would have been a work of ſupererogation, and the perfection of his obedience no way affected, by theſe duties which he had no call to perform.

ARG. 3. '*Were religious ſwearing a moral duty, it would have been obſerved by the venerable* APOSTLES *of Chriſt.*'

What I have obſerved on his former argument, equally anſwers this. It is founded upon a falſe ſuppoſition, that covenanting is not an *occaſional*, but an ordinary *ſtated* duty. This I have already diſproved at ſome length *. If covenanting was an occaſional duty, which he will never be able to diſprove, why ſhould the venerable apoſtles perform it, if they had no call thereto in adorable providence? With reſpect to occaſional duties, it will never prove that they are not moral, becauſe they are not exemplified in the conduct of the apoſtles; unleſs it is evinced, that if they are duties, there was certainly a call in providence to perform them. He may as well argue, that it was not a duty under the Old Teſtament, becauſe it was not exemplified, in the lives of a number of the moſt eminent prophets. They were ſatisfied, that although it was an undeniable duty, they had no call to perform it; and ſo might the apoſtles in their day.

Beſides, he always conſiders covenanting as a *national* duty; and in the apoſtles days, there was no nation, in general, profeſſing Chriſtianity. He indeed aſſerts, that '*there is not a ſingle grain of weight*,' in this objection. I am certain, there is as little weight in his anſwer to it; namely, that moral duties are binding upon '*all perſons, as well as nations.*'

I anſwer, although moral duties are binding on all, which is not the caſe with reſpect to *occaſional* duties, our author

* See the Sermons, p. 25,—33.

may prove, that all theſe duties, which are properly national, are to be performed by a few, when neglected by the body of the nation. For example; it is a national duty for a people to defend themſelves from the inroads of their enemies; and is included in the ſixth commandment of the moral law: but if the body of the nation ſhould neglect it, will Mr. H——n maintain, that it is binding on a few hundreds, to encounter numerous thouſands who may come againſt them; would he lead them on? Whatever be in this objection, his anſwer does not in the leaſt remove it.—In a word, this third argument ſuppoſes, what will not be granted, and what he is unable to prove; namely, that if covenanting is a moral duty, it muſt be a *ſtated*, not an *occaſional duty*: or, if it is an occaſional duty, that there was certainly a call to perform it in the apoſtles days. Unleſs one or other of theſe is true, there is not a ſingle grain of weight in his argument; and neither of them will he ever be able to prove.

ARG. 4. '*The ſwearing of national religious oaths, under* '*the goſpel, is not a moral duty; becauſe, in that clear and* '*full explication of the moral law, given in the New Teſtament,* '*there is no* PRECEPT *enjoining ſuch a duty.*'

His ſecond and third arguments evidently ſuppoſe covenanting to be an ordinary *ſtated* duty; and therefore little occaſion to enlarge in anſwering them: this one is by far more ſpecious; but, when examined, is equally inconcluſive. He obſerves firſt, that '*It will not be denied, that the New-Teſtament revelation* '*contains a diſcovery, both of the doctrines of the goſpel, and* '*precepts of the moral law, much more clear and explicit than* '*the Old Teſtament.*' I anſwer; it will not be denied with reſpect to doctrines, and readily granted, that in the New Teſtament, we have the moral law freed from a variety of the corrupt gloſſes of the Jewiſh Rabbins; and alſo, a variety of moral duties, more clearly expreſſed than in the Old Teſtament. But it will not be granted; no verily, it muſt be *proved*, that every moral duty is ſo, as we are not diſpoſed to conſider the Old Teſtament as an almanack out of date. It is an eaſy method of avoiding every thing that clogs our ſcheme, to aſſert, *It will not be denied.* It will not be denied in the general; but particulars require a proof. In the word of God, the Old and New Teſtament, we have a *complete*, a *perfect* diſcovery

of doctrines, and of duties, religious and relative. And the New Teſtament is more clear and explicit in the general; but a variety of duties are as clear as words can expreſs them in the Old Teſtament: and where this is the caſe, there was the leſs occaſion to be explicit in the New Teſtament. In the book of Pſalms, we have a complete ſyſtem, ſo to ſpeak, of religious experiences, beyond any of the books of the New Teſtament; nor was there occaſion for the apoſtles to enlarge on this, when the Pſalms are ſo full and explicit. In like manner, the Old Teſtament is clear and explicit on covenanting; and therefore leſs occaſion to be explicit in the New.—Theſe things may be obvious to the weakeſt capacities.

But to come to the point, if our author's argument is ſolid, that nothing can be a moral duty, which is not expreſly enjoined in the New Teſtament; he muſt diſcard a variety of duties, which have not till *now* been called in queſtion, by Preſbyterians at leaſt. I may obſerve, before I proceed to particulars, that I mean not to inſinuate, the remoteſt heſitation concerning theſe duties; for, although they are not expreſly enjoined in the New Teſtament, the Old is explicit and full. I intended to illuſtrate a number of duties at ſome length; but, for brevity's ſake, I ſhall only enumerate a few.

If our Author's argument is ſolid, 1. Infant baptiſm, and parents engagements in the baptiſm of their children; 2. Family worſhip; 3. Secret, or ſocial prayer, EVERY MORNING *and* EVENING; 4. Family faſting; and I may add, 5. The covenanting which Mr. H——n applauds in the after-part of his performance;—all theſe muſt be *reprobated* as no moral duties, for they are not expreſly enjoined in the New Teſtament. We have theſe duties, however, ſet before us very clearly, in the Old Teſtament.—Infant circumciſion has hitherto been conſidered, as a very evident proof of what reſpects the baptiſm of infants.—Family worſhip, Jer. x. 25. *Pour out thy fury—upon the* FAMILIES *that call not on thy name:* And, ſays Joſhua, *As for* ME, *and my* HOUSE, *we will ſerve the Lord.*—Secret prayer is expreſly mentioned in the New Teſtament; but no mention of it *morning* and *evening*, ſo far as I remember: but this is clear in the Old Teſtament, Pſal. xcii. 2. *To ſhew forth thy loving-kindneſs in the morning, and thy faithfulneſs* EVERY

night.—Faſting is likewiſe mentioned in the New Teſtament; and huſbands and wives giving themſelves to prayer and faſting; but it is not ſaid, whether in a perſonal, family, or public way; and no expreſs mention of family faſting in the New Teſtament: but the Old is very explicit, Zech. xii. 12. *And the land ſhall mourn, every family apart.*—— Theſe, and other plain moral duties, which might be mentioned, are not expreſly enjoined in the New Teſtament; nor was there any occaſion for it, the Old is ſo full and explicit.—In like manner, the Old Teſtament being full and explicit on covenanting, both as to precept and practice, and being a duty neither ceremonial nor judicial; there was no occaſion for its being expreſly enjoined in the New.

From theſe few particulars, it is very evident, that it can be no proof that a duty is not moral, becauſe it is not expreſly enjoined in the New Teſtament. God has given us a perfect rule of duty: but it is in the Old and New Teſtament conjoined. And for a man to inculcate, and practiſe a variety of duties, which are not expreſly enjoined in the New Teſtament, which I hope Mr. H——n does; and at the ſame time give a bold defiance, to prove that any ſuch thing is a moral duty: —They may reconcile this who can.

Should any of his hearers alledge to him, that infant baptiſm, and family worſhip, are branches of ſuperſtition, and cannot be binding on them, for they are not expreſly enjoined in the New Teſtament; he would, perhaps, find ſome difficulty to reply, in a conſiſtency with his own argument. I am aware, he may alledge, that infant baptiſm is a poſitive inſtitution: but this cannot be; for he maintains, that all poſitive inſtitutions, under the Old Teſtament, are abrogated: and it can never then be a poſitive inſtitution of the New, without being ſo much as mentioned. And thus the Reader may ſee, that however ſpecious this argument may appear at firſt view, when it is examined it is altogether inconcluſive.

ARG 5. '*Duties that are truly moral, force a ſenſe and* '*impreſſion of their obligation, even upon* WICKED *men: But* '*religious ſwearing of national covenants does not, in many* '*caſes, carry home a ſenſe of its obligation upon* GOOD *men.*'

This appears to me, to be a very unadviſed argument; I chuſe not to call it worſe. He affirms, with a good deal of

aſſurance, '*This is a clear proof, ariſing from the very frame* '*and conſtitution of the human mind, that there exiſts no ſuch* '*moral obligation.*' Whatever philoſophy may be in this, concerning man in his innocent ſtate; I apprehend it is very *wretched* divinity, applied to man in his lapſed condition. It is true, there are moral duties which affect the conſcience of ungodly men; and I could mention ſome poſitive duties, which do ſo alſo, when ungodly men have the word of God among their hands. But it will never follow from this, that EVERY duty included in the moral law of God, firſt and ſecond table, *forces* a ſenſe of its obligation on the conſcience of the wicked. Does the ſin of nature, the ſin of unbelief, the ſin of hypocriſy; or the duty of believing, of diſclaiming all confidence in ourſelves, and our own righteouſneſs; of bewailing natural depravity, unbelief, and hypocriſy, affect the conſcience of the ungodly? If he will aſſert this, I am certain, he muſt contradict the generality of ſound divines. It has generally been allowed, that it is only ſome *groſſer* immoralities, which uſually alarm the conſcience of the wicked: And never any, that I know of, *till now*, maintained, that every branch of God's worſhip, contained in the firſt table of his law, *forces* a ſenſe of its obligation, on the conſciences of the wicked. Nay, this firſt branch of his argument appears to me, at leaſt, to include a flat denial of *natural depravity*, as far as it reſpects the underſtanding. Duties cannot impreſs a ſenſe of their obligation, if they are not known: And, if the whole extent of the moral law is known by wicked men, what did Adam in innocence know more, with reſpect to the duties incumbent on him?

To the ſecond branch of this argument, namely, that covenanting does not impreſs the conſcience of *good* men; I anſwer, The apoſtle is expreſs, that the godly, while here, know but *in part*; and therefore, may be ignorant of ſome particular duties of the moral law: And, if they be ignorant of them, How ſhould they impreſs their conſcience? And, if good men cannot be ignorant of any duty of the moral law; they cannot be guilty of any ſin of ignorance, except in matters of mere ſpeculation; and perhaps, not even in theſe. And as the firſt branch of this argument is inconſiſtent with the depravity of nature; this ſecond branch, evidently lands us in the reve-

ries of enthuſiaſm. Our Author urges the *feelings* of good men, and in what manner their conſciences are, or are not affected, as an argument to prove, that this or that is, or is not a moral duty. This is to make the *feelings* of good men our *rule*, and to ſubſtitute them in the place of the *unerring* rule, which is the very ſoul of enthuſiaſm. It is *to the law and to the teſtimony.*—I ſhall leave the further conſideration of this argument, ariſing from the conſtitution of the human mind, to theſe who are better acquainted with metaphyſical diſquiſitions.

ARG. 6. '*The very* CONTENTIONS *which have prevailed a-*
'*mong Chriſtians, concerning the moral obligation of ſwearing*
'*religious covenants, is an argument of conſiderable weight*
'*againſt the morality of ſuch oaths.*'

I may juſt as well argue, that it is an argument of conſiderable weight, in *favour* of the morality of covenanting: For, depraved nature ſpurns at moral obligations; and rages like a wild bull in a net. And if we are to diſclaim every thing which has been the occaſion of warm contentions among Proteſtants; I apprehend every one can eaſily ſee the conſequence. He alledges, that, Antinomians excepted, Proteſtants of every denomination are agreed, in acknowledging the obligation of the moral law. But, it is an eaſy matter to ſee, that there is a very wide difference, between being agreed about the *obligation* of the moral law, and being agreed about every particular *branch* of *duty* which it enjoins us to perform. He ſeems, on this argument, to have ſecond-table duties principally in view; but he ſhould remember, that covenanting is a firſt-table duty. It were no great difficulty to ſhew, that Proteſtants of different denominations, are not as much agreed, as he alledges, about every particular of God's worſhip, contained in the firſt table of the moral law. Nay, when they are not agreed about the *object* of worſhip, ſome of them denying the Deity of the Son and holy Spirit; they cannot be agreed about the *worſhip itſelf*, objectively conſidered.

But this argument ſeems to be founded on a particular aſſertion of our Author, '*Obligations truly moral, are ſo congenial*
'*to the frame of the human mind.*' It is hard to ſay, what he may mean, by moral obligations being *ſo congenial* to the frame of the human mind. If he means the human mind before the

entrance of ſin, I am the leſs concerned; for this can make nothing for his argument: But, if he means human nature in its lapſed ſtate, he may reconcile this with the divine declaration, *For vain man would be wiſe, though man be born like a wild aſſe's colt*, Job xi. 12. A creature ſtupid and unteachable. I mean not, that he intends to deny the depravity of nature; No, he aſſerts it very explicitly; but had he kept it in his view, he might have ſeen ſome reaſon to ſupercede both this, and ſome former arguments.

Now, as this general branch contains the ſubſtance of his reaſoning againſt covenanting; the reader, will permit me, in ſo many words, to lay before him, Mr. H——n's arguments, and the anſwers: I ſhall ſtudy more brevity on ſubſequent particulars.

ARG. 1. '*Covenanting was not performed before the conſti-*
'*tution of the Jewiſh church:—Good men before the flood did*
'*not perform it.*

Anſ. 1. This plainly implies, that although all the account we have of religious duties, for two thouſand years before the flood, may be ſummed up in a ſentence or two; yet nothing can be a moral duty, which is not expreſly mentioned. 2. That the obſervation of the Sabbath cannot be a moral duty; for we have no expreſs mention of the godly obſerving it, before the conſtitution of the Jewiſh church.

ARG. 2. '*It was never obſerved by the holy Jeſus himſelf.*'

Anſ. 1. This implies, that it was no duty at all; for the Saviour fulfilled all righteouſneſs. But Mr. H——n allows, that it was binding till the death of Chriſt; it is therefore a direct attack on the *perfection* of the Redeemer's righteouſneſs; a duty binding till his death, but never performed by him. 2. It implies, that the duties incumbent on huſbands, parents, brothers, are not moral. 3. Although it is a *moral*, it is not a *ſtated*, but an *occaſional* duty; and as the Saviour never performed it, we may be certain there was no call to it in his day.

ARG. 3. '*The venerable apoſtles of Chriſt, did not per-*
'*form it.*'

Anſ. 1. He always repreſents it as a national duty; but there was no nation in general, profeſſing Chriſtianity in the

apoſtle's days. 2. Being an *occaſional* duty, if there was no call to it in providence in their day, at leaſt among the churches in general, why ſhould they have obſerved it? It would have been a work of ſupererogation.

ARG. 4. '*There is no precept enjoining it in the New Teſ-*
'*tament.*'

Anſ. This implies, that nothing can be a moral duty, which is not expreſly enjoined in the New Teſtament; and of conſequence infant baptiſm, family-worſhip, prayer, EVERY morning and evening, family faſting, *&c.* muſt be ſtruck off from the liſt of moral duties, Theſe duties, are not expreſly enjoined in the New Teſtament; but the Old Teſtament is very full and explicit; and the leſs occaſion to inſiſt on them in the NEW, when the OLD was ſo very full. And this is evidently the caſe with covenanting.

ARG. 5. '*Moral duties impreſs the conſcience of wicked*
'*men; but covenanting does not impreſs the conſcience of good*
'*men.*'

Anſ. The firſt branch implies, that depravity has not affected the judgment. Duties cannot affect the conſcience, till they are known; and if the ungodly know the whole extent of the moral law, what did Adam know more?—The ſecond branch leads me into the wilds of enthuſiaſm, making the feelings and impreſſions of good men, the rule whereby to judge of the morality of duties.

ARG. 6. '*The contentions which have prevailed among Chri-*
'*ſtians*, &c.'

Anſ. This is juſt as good an argument for, as againſt covenanting: and moral obligations *congenial to the human mind*, upon which this argument is founded, are inconſiſtent with the doctrine of original depravity. When I conſider this ſum of his arguments, I am truly at a loſs to know, on what account it is, that he deſpairs of ſeeing them anſwered, with ſcriptural, rational arguments. But, I proceed to his next general branch.

V. '*To make ſome obſervations on the* NATIONAL COVENANT
'*of Scotland, and the* SOLEMN LEAGUE *and Covenant of the*
'*three Nations.*'

He would ſeem now to be ſenſible, that his reviling our

worthy anceſtors, in his firſt performance, is not quite ſo agreeable as he apprehended; accordingly, he now profeſſes a conſiderable veneration for them. This is ſo far good. He ſeems to be very fond the public ſhould imagine, that Seceders are altogether ignorant, that ſome might have political views, in framing and promoting the ſolemn league. I apprehend, Seceders know as much of depraved human nature, that however *congenial* moral obligations may be; they are convinced, that ſuch ſmall connections, as the Seceſſion or Relief, are ſeldom or never formed without deſigning men among them; much leſs is it to be thought, that ſuch an extenſive connection as the ſolemn league, was free of them. But, we are yet to learn, how this is inconſiſtent, as he inſinuates, with the generality of the rulers, the miniſters and people, being men of candour, and excited by the example of their brethren in Scotland. But, for our Author to alledge, that all that the Engliſh parliament had in their view, in bringing religion into the quarrel with their Sovereign; and in promoting the ſolemn league, and the reformation with which it was attended, was only to forward their *political ſtratagems*, is certainly going too far. We have all reaſon to think, that the body of the Engliſh parliament, at that time, were from judgment and conſcience, enemies to Prelacy; and had the reformation of religion in England honeſtly at heart. To aſſert the contrary, diſcovers no great acquaintance with the character of theſe famous men. It is to charge them with the *vileſt perjury*, in ſwearing the ſolemn league; and with the *groſſeſt diſſimulation* in aboliſhing Epiſcopacy, and eſtabliſhing the preſbyterial form of church-government. Seceders, therefore, have committed no blunder, when they maintain, in their Teſtimony, that the great reformation, carried on in Scotland, ſtirred up their neighbours in England to join with them, even although there was a number ſtill attached to Prelacy, or ſomething worſe.—It would be no loſs to our Author, as well as Seceders, to be a little better acquainted with the hiſtory of that period; for, however extenſive, he may apprehend his knowledge is, of the tranſactions of theſe times, he has not diſcovered much of it in his publications, as we may obſerve more particularly afterwards.

In page 118, he lays down the plan of this fifth general branch, thus.

'*In ſpeaking of the covenants, national and ſolemn league, I ſhall, firſt, conſider their obligation; ſecondly, I ſhall mention a few things in them, which rendered them exceedingly improper to be ſworn and impoſed as national oaths.*'

1. '*I am to conſider the obligation of theſe celebrated national oaths of the laſt century.*'

We muſt then examine a little, this *conſideration*, celebrated by ſome far above the oaths of the laſt century. And, firſt, we have a long winding ſtory concerning oaths having no obligation at all: That all obligation ariſes ſolely from the authority of the Lawgiver, and Revealer. I know Mr. H——n is not ſingular in this, and it were eaſy to animadvert on ſeveral of his aſſertions; but I know no end it ſerves. It appears to me, to be only a wrangle about the propriety of the word OBLIGATION. If it is allowed, and I apprehend it will not be refuſed, that there is ſomething or other about an oath, which makes the violation of it, conſtitute the heinous ſin of perjury; it is a matter of indifference to me, whether it is called *obligation* or *electricity*. Nor, does this in the leaſt affect the obligation of public covenants.

Only, I cannot help thinking, that declaring an oath has *no* obligation, without ſaying any thing more concerning it, is well adapted, to make the generation regardleſs of an oath, and as guilty of perjury, as our anceſtors in the laſt century. A man, for inſtance, is about to give his oath in a cuſtom-houſe; he may reaſon thus with himſelf, I have no occaſion to regard it; for divines aſſure me, it lays me under no obligation to declare the truth. And after aſſerting, that an oath has no obligation, it would have been as much for edification, to have employed ſome of his pages, which are filled up with groundleſs reproaches; in ſhewing the generation the *nature* of, and how they ought to *fear* an oath, notwithſtanding of the modern diſcovery, that it conſtitutes no obligation. He gives a very juſt diſcription of his own account of oaths in general, and their obligation, page 121, '*Many entertain notions exceedingly confuſed*,' &c. But, I paſs this, as it has very little connexion with the point in queſtion.

In page 122, he proceeds to *conſider* and *refute* the *weak* and *ignorant* arguments of Seceders, to prove the perpetual obligation of our covenants. I have very little concern with

him here, as I have uſed only one of the arguments he mentions; but I mean, not to loſe ſight of him in any thing.

The firſt argument he mentions, as urged by Seceders, is the following. 'It is pled, that they are of perpetual obligation, becauſe the principal *matter* of them is the truths of God.' To this ſuppoſed argument, he replies, '*That an oath to divine truths, has no obligation at all.*'

I anſwer. He will acknowledge, however, that if ſuch an oath is *lawful*, the violation of it will certainly conſtitute the ſin of perjury. And I have no anxiety, whether it is ſtiled *obligation* or *coheſion*. Mr. H——n acknowledges, page 121, that although an oath to divine truths has *no* obligation, that it has an obligation in things *indifferent*; and that when deſcendents acquieſce in the deeds of their fathers, they take this obligation upon themſelves. From this, I argue, that whatever be in an oath, when poſterity acquieſce in the vows, or oaths of their anceſtors, they take this upon themſelves. And there is ſomething in an oath, which renders the violation of it perjury; and when poſterity acquieſce in the vows, or oaths, of their anceſtors, according to his own doctrine, they take this on themſelves, be it obligation, or what it will. I have already ſhown *, that in the very nature of church fellowſhip, poſterity do voluntarily acquieſce, and take on themſelves the *obligation* of their anceſtors vows, or call it what you will. On this particular, therefore, we are well nigh agreed.

The ſecond argument he mentions, as urged by his apponents, is this.

2. 'It is pled, that theſe covenants are of perpetual obligation, becauſe they bind to the very ſame things with baptiſm.' To this he replies. '*That baptiſm is an expreſs ordinance of Chriſt, under the New Teſtament, which covenanting is not*, &c.'

I anſwer. This is a mere begging the queſtion; for, if covenanting is a moral duty, (and all he has yet advanced, does not in the leaſt diſapprove it), this reply ſerves for nothing. Beſides, infant baptiſm is not expreſly mentioned, more than covenanting. Here he ſeems to own, that baptiſm and the Lord's ſupper conſtitute an obligation. But, certainly, the

* See the Sermons, p. 23.

doctrines and duties revealed, and required in the word of God, are the very *matter* of the engagements, in baptiſm and the ſupper; and the obligation ariſing from the authority of the Revealer, as perfect, as it poſſibly can be.

Can baptiſm and the ſupper make the obligation exceed *poſſible perfection?* And if *baptiſm* and the *ſupper* may, (as has been generally thought, till of late), conſtitute an obligation of a different kind, without derogating in the leaſt, from the perfection of the obligation of the divine law, why may not a *vow*, or *oath*, do the ſame? This argument, does not ſeem to be very much hurt by his reply.

He tells us, in anſwering this argument, '*That one great* '*end of theſe ordinances* (baptiſm and the ſupper) *is, that* '*Chriſtians may dedicate themſelves to the ſervice of God.*' Here he ſeems to have forgot his own doctrine, that nothing can be a moral duty, which is not enjoined by ſome particular precept in the New Teſtament. It is true, we have ſelf-dedication enjoined in the New Teſtament; and I readily agree with him, that it is a very ſuitable exerciſe at a communion table: But, where do we find any particular precept enjoining it, in the ſacrament of the ſupper? He next repreſents his opponents, as arguing thus. 'It is the duty of one Chriſtian 'to dedicate himſelf to God, by a ſolemn oath, it is the duty 'of a family, of a congregation, and of a nation to do the 'ſame.'

All that he refuſes in this argument, is the '*formality*, or '*ſolemnity of an oath.*' I anſwer. We have ſcripture precept and example, for the ſolemnity of an oath in covenanting, under the Old Teſtament: And the reader muſt judge for himſelf, if Mr. H——n's arguments are any proof, that it is abrogated under the New.

He alledges, fourthly, that the covenant which the Iſraelites made with the Gibeonites, is one of the *chief* arguments for covenant-obligation. I have uſed it as an argument, though not as a chief one: But, if there is no other objection to it, except what he has urged, it will continue an unanſwerable argument to the end of time.

He poſitively affirms, that this covenant was not *binding* at all, for two reaſons. 1. '*They were drawn into it by craft* '*and deceit;*' and he maintains, that no man can prove, that

a contract is binding in this caſe. In this he arraigns JEHOVAH himſelf, as we may ſee afterwards. 2. '*It was made in direct 'oppoſition to the will and command of God.*' It is true, it was a poſitive command to Iſrael, to deſtroy the Amorites; but the obligation of an oath, or covenant, being moral, the poſitive muſt yield to the moral obligation: As the obligation to ſanctify one day in ſeven, which is poſitive, yields to the works of neceſſity and mercy, which are moral. This obligation, inſtead of refuting covennant-obligation, is no contemptible proof of the morality of it.

He owns, that the princes thought it binding; but they were miſtaken: It is evident Joſhua though it binding; and the light of nature directed the Gibeonites to conſider it as obligatory; and accordingly they apply to Joſhua to defend them. On a former branch, our Author urges it as a conſiderable argument, that a thing is moral, when the minds even of *wicked* men, are impreſſed with its obligation. This was evidently the caſe here; for the Gibeonites do not ſeem to have had the leaſt heſitation about Joſhua's being bound to defend them. But, it does not ſerve a turn here.—I might add, that all the commentators I have ſeen, conſider it as obligatory; and if Seceders muſt be charged with ignorance, for viewing it in this light, they are in good company. But all theſe, no doubt, might be miſtaken.

But, if our Author's comment is juſt, when Joſhua defended the Gibeonites, it was a piece of groſs wickedneſs, preferring an unlawful impious oath, to the expreſs command of God. But, amazing! Jehovah himſelf, encourages him to proceed in this wickedneſs; and, in a moſt miraculous manner, countenances him in the perpetration of it. See Joſh. x. 8, 11, 13. *And the Lord ſaid unto Joſhua, Fear them not; for I have delivered them into thy hand: There ſhall not a man of them ſtand before thee.—The Lord caſt down great ſtones from heaven.—And the ſun ſtood ſtill, and the moon ſtayed.* And all this, in perpetrating a piece of *groſs wickedneſs*. He who reproves God, muſt anſwer for it.

It will, perhaps, be objected, that the Lord countenanced them in deſtroying the Amorites, as he had commanded them. I anſwer; he likewiſe countenanced them in defending the Amorites, and preferring their own unlawful oath unto his ex-

preſs command. If this oath was not obligatory, inſtead of the Lord's ſaying unto Joſhua, *Fear them not*; it is very natural to think, he would have ſaid to him, Let the children of Iſrael abide in their camp; let the Amorites deſtroy one another: your oath lays you under no obligation to defend the Gibeonites. And although he had promiſed them ſucceſs in deſtroying the Amorites, they behoved to turn their backs on their enemies immediately before this, till a *private perſonal ſin* was puniſhed; I mean, Achan's treſpaſs: and can we ſuppoſe, that he would encourage them, in a *public national ſin*, which it ſurely was, to defend the Gibeonites, if this oath was not binding? This is evidently to ſay, like the Jews of old, *The Lord's ways are unequal.*—Beſides, Mr. H——n allows, page. 140, that though it is a ſin to make an unlawful oath; it is a greater ſin to keep it: here he makes Jehovah to aſſiſt them in perpetrating the greater iniquity.

It is very evident likewiſe, from 2 Sam. xxi. 2. that this covenant was binding hundreds of years after, from the Lord's viſiting Iſrael with three years ſore famine, on account of Saul's attempting to deſtroy the Gibeonites. Mr. H——n informs us, that '*two remarks will ſet this matter in a light quite clear* '*and diſtinct.*' The reader muſt always take it for granted, that his bare aſſertion, ſets any thing in the cleareſt light. His two remarks, however, aſſign very different reaſons, why the Lord viſited Iſrael with three years famine: nor does he inform his reader which was the real one; but it is quite clear and diſtinct!

1. His firſt obſervation is, '*Though he* (*viz.* Saul) *executed* '*the divine command materially;—he was not influenced by* '*right motives*, &c.' But if Saul executed the divine command materially, there was no injuſtice done to the Gibeonites; and why then apply to them, to know what would ſatisfy them? Was it becauſe there was not a God in Iſrael, that David muſt apply to the Gibeonites, to know how Saul's wrong motives might be expiated! If it was a violation of the oath, or covenant, made with them, it is eaſy to ſee the equity of applying to them, to know what would ſatisfy them; and Jehovah himſelf declares his approbation. Beſides, our Author's aſſertion, that the Lord viſited with three years famine for Saul's wrong motives, if the action was good in itſelf, is ſome-

what ſingular. We find the Lord rather deferred his judgments, when the actions of wicked men were materially good, although we are certain their motives were wrong. Ahab's motives, in humbling himſelf, were legal and ſelfiſh; but the Lord declares to his prophet, *Becauſe he humbleth himſelf before me, I will not bring the evil in his days*, 1 Kings xxi. 19.—We have abundant reaſon to conclude, that Jehu's motives were ſelfiſh, in cutting off the houſe of Ahab. He indeed ſaid, *Come ſee my zeal for the Lord;* but it was zeal to eſtabliſh himſelf on the throne. Had it been true zeal for the Lord, it would have animated him to deſtroy the calves, as well as Ahab's houſe; but he clave to them. But, ſays Jehovah, *Becauſe thou haſt done well,—thy children of the fourth generation ſhall ſit on the throne of Iſrael*, 2 Kings x. 30. No account here of public judgments for Jehu's wrong motives. No doubt, God may and will puniſh wrong motives; but he ſees meet in his infinite wiſdom, that there ſhould be viſible cauſes, for viſible ſtrokes, as well as bad motives. But, perhaps, ſeeing the futility of his firſt remark, he obſerves,

2. '*It is more than probable, that the Gibeonites, at the time when Saul ſlew them, were converted to the Jewiſh religion.*' I anſwer; ſome of them might, and ſo might ſome of the reſt of the Amorites, many of whom were not cut off by the Iſraelites. But that the Gibeonites, in general, were converted to the Jewiſh religion, he will never be able to prove. Nor will his Hebrew root do him much ſervice, unleſs he can prove, 1. That NONE but the Gibeonites were ſervants to the Prieſts and Levites; and, 2. That a few individuals joining in the national covenant in Nehemiah's time, is a *clear* and *diſtinct* proof, that the Gibeonites in general, were converted to the Jewiſh religion five hundred years before.

But I need not inſiſt on this, for the Spirit of God undoubtedly knew the reaſon, why it was unlawful to ſlay the Gibeonites; and he aſſigns a very different one, 2 Sam. xxi. 2. *Now, the Gibeonites were not of the children of Iſrael, but of the remnant of the Amorites, and the children of Iſrael had ſworn unto them; and Saul ſought to ſlay them*, &c. Theſe words, encloſed in a parentheſis, are evidently intended to aſſign the reaſon, why it was unlawful to ſlay the Gibeonites. And from this, all the commentators I have ſeen, conclude at once, that

it was this oath, or covenant, which rendered it unlawful to ſlay them. It is ſo evident, that I only deſire any man of candour and common ſenſe to read the paſſage; and he cannot fail to be convinced. If Mr. H——n's ſecond remark were juſt, unleſs the Spirit of God had deſigned to impoſe upon ignorant mortals, the paſſage would have run thus, 'They were 'of the remnant of the Amorites, *but were converted to the* 'Jewiſh religion, and Saul ſought to ſlay them.' But it runs, *The children of Iſrael had ſworn to them, and Saul ſought to ſlay them.* I aſk, why is this oath, or covenant, mentioned in this paſſage at all, if it is not to ſhew, why it was unlawful to deſtroy the Gibeonites? It is ſomething ſtrange, that after ſuch palpable perverſion of ſcripture, Mr. H——n ſhould exclaim about ſwallowing the groſſeſt abſurdities, if they give countenance to the favourite Shibboleth of a party. One can ſcarcely fail to think, that he conſidered this as the beſt cloak to conceal conſcious guilt. It is very evident, how he toils and ſweats, in order to pervert, or rather contradict theſe paſſages of ſcripture; becauſe they are very unfriendly to a certain party Shibboleth. There is one objection, which ſome have urged againſt this argument, which indicates ſome meaſure of common ſagacity; but this I have already anſwered †.

5. The fifth argument he mentions, as urged by his opponents, is this. '*It is pled, that theſe national oaths,—were* 'of perpetual obligation, becauſe God ſignally owned the cove-'nanters with his preſence.'

He ſeems to grant, that they were eminently countenanced, but finds a number of evaſions; ſuch as, they were godly men, and right in the general: and therefore, the Lord might remarkably aſſiſt them, although they were wrong in this particular. This is a mere evaſion; for the meaning of the argument is, that the Lord granted them his preſence in a remarkable manner, in the very duty of covenanting; and it is not very rational to think, that he would countenance them in an act of will-worſhip.—He now proceeds to the laſt argument he mentions, as pled by Seceders.

6. '*It is argued,—if they were not of perpetual obligation,* 'then many of the martyrs died in vain.'

It is very agreeable to hear him maintain, that the martyrs

† See the Sermons, p. 20, 21.

did not die in vain. At the ſame time, I am perſuaded, that a number of godly martyrs bearing teſtimony to theſe covenants, in the midſt of all the horrors of the moſt tormenting deaths, not only with compoſure, but undaunted triumph, will not want its influence with ſoberly diſpoſed perſons. But I mean not to inſiſt, neither on this nor the former argument; becauſe, whatever influence they may have with theſe, who are perſuaded from the word of God, that covenanting is a moral duty; I would never urge them as an argument, with a bigoted enemy to covenanting. It is neither the workings of grace within, nor the ſentiments of the moſt eminently religious; but the unerring word, which muſt be our rule.—Theſe are all the arguments for covenanting, which he attempts to anſwer; I have uſed none of them, except the Gibeonites covenant; and the reader may judge, if Mr. H——n's ſingular remarks in the leaſt affect it.

In page 133, he proceeds to the ſecond diviſion of this branch, namely,

'*To point out ſome things in the covenants, national and ſolemn league, which rendered them very improper and unſafe to be ſworn in a national capacity.*'

His firſt objection to the national covenant, is the abjuration of Popery, expreſſed in a great variety of particulars, which he alledges not one hundred perſons in the kingdom underſtood diſtinctly. And then we have a prodigious bluſter, what a *monſtrous*, *dangerous*, and *ſinful* impoſition it was, to plunge the nation into the guilt of ſwearing an oath, which they neither did, nor could underſtand. I anſwer; That there may be ſeveral particulars, which many at this day do not underſtand; but, they may know very well, that they are branches of that Antichriſtian ſyſtem of ſuperſtition, and no foundation for them in the word of God; and why not abjure them? And beſides, I make no queſtion, but as they were ſtruggling from beneath this load of ſuperſtition at that time, they were much better acquainted with theſe branches of Popery, than many are at this day. Nay, the original covenanters were well acquainted with them.—Mr. H——n himſelf puts the queſtion, p. 151. '*What is Popery, but a ſyſtem of clerical inſtitutions impoſed on mankind?*' And why ſhould they be at a loſs to abjure human impoſitions

in the worſhip of the living God, which they were abundantly certain, had no foundation in his word? I may add, that even granting the body of the people were *totally* ignorant of theſe branches of Popery, which was not the caſe, but though they had not even read their names, like a *parrot*, to uſe his own phraſe; yet, ſtill the queſtion returns, was it *impoſſible* to make the people underſtand theſe articles? Were not the miniſters enjoined to explain them to the people, and make them *underſtand* them, before they admitted them to ſwear the covenant? Neither of theſe can be very decently refuſed; and why ſuch an outcry about ignorant ſwearing?

As a particular inſtance, he mentions the decrees of the council of Trent, which he affirms, they could not underſtand. He tells us, *Trent was a city in Italy.* I am certain, Geographers do not uſually reckon it a city of Italy. Had he conſulted ſome of the Seceders in his neighbourhood, they would probably have informed him, that it is a city in *Auſtrian Germany;* and that the emperor inſiſted, the council ſhould be held within his territories, and the Pope was obliged to yield for a time; but this is a matter of little moment. To his objection, I anſwer, the national covenant mentions the *erroneous* and *bloody* decrees of the council of Trent. They might be very certain, that the word of God approves of no erroneous or bloody decrees; nor was there any impracticability in their being abundantly aſcertained, that erroneous and bloody decrees were enacted; and therefore, no evidence of ignorant ſwearing in abjuring them.

He aſks, '*But what law of God requires them to ſwear a* '*gainſt all theſe religions?*' I anſwer; The Iſraelites in their covenanting, abjured idolatry in all the branches of it, which included all the falſe religions then in the world. And as theſe covenants were moral, they ſet us an example, whenever public covenanting is called for, to abjure any falſe religion, which endangers either our religious, or civil liberty.

The reader may conſider, if Mr. H——n is not well nigh charging Jehovah himſelf, with enjoining *ignorant* ſwearing. The Iſraelites were enjoined to ſwear, that they would not *make any likeneſs of any thing, which was in heaven above, or earth beneath, or the waters under the earth;* for the ſecond command was included in their national covenant. According

to Mr. H——n's account of this matter, they behoved to ſwear ignorantly; unleſs they knew the preciſe form of every thing in heaven above, earth beneath, and the waters under the earth: For, how could they make the likeneſs of any thing, till they knew what that thing was like? And if they knew not what it was like, according to our Author's doctrine, they ignorantly ſwore to refrain from they knew not what. But, I apprehend, they were as ignorant here, as our anceſtors were concerning the various branches of Popery; inſtead of knowing the preciſe form of every thing, they had not, even like a *parrot*, read the names of numbers of them. They, no doubt, knew very well, that idolatry in all the branches of it, was contrary to the word of God; and our anceſtors, in like manner knew, that Popery, AS SUCH, was contrary to the word of God, and might very ſafely abjure it.

His ſecond quarrel is with that expreſſion in the covenant, '*Through the knowledge and love of God's true religion imprinted* '*in our hearts by the holy Spirit.*' I very readily own, that this expreſſion is too ſtrong; though, I apprehend, that all they meant by it is, that they were *upright* and *candid*, as it is evidently ſet in oppoſition to being moved by worldly reſpects, in the preceding clauſe. And they ſeem to mean the ſame thing, as in the entry of the covenant, when they ſpeak of being *reſolved in matters of true and falſe religion, by God's word and Spirit.* And what leſs does every communicant ſay practically, before God and men, when he ſits down at a communion table? That they intended actually to ſwear, that they had experienced the ſaving operations of the Spirit on their hearts, I cannot believe: They juſt meant, that they were ſincere and honeſt, in their attachment unto, and deſire to promote reformation. But, as it is the *expreſſions*, and not what they *intended*, we have to do with; I own, that the expreſſion does not appear to me, to be very cautious. But it will require no ſmall degree of ingenuity to prove, that this can effect the *morality* of our covenants, or their *binding* obligation, any more, than an incautious expreſſion in an oath of allegiance to an earthly prince, will invalidate the oath, and free the jurant from its obligation. If their meaning was *good*, what does it make againſt them? And, if we do not *juſtify* the expreſſion, what does it make againſt us?

His third objection is to the ſolemn league, becauſe *Prelacy* is abſurd; or the government of the church by archbiſhops, biſhops, chancellors, *&c.* Here again, he cries out of ignorant ſwearing, which I do not think deſerves any reply, but deriſion. If I am well ſatisfied, as every Preſbyterian ſhould be, that the *Preſbyterial*, is the ONLY form of church-government, of divine inſtitution under the New Teſtament; I can be at no loſs to abjure any antiſcriptural hierarcy whatever. And even granting, that the body of the three kingdoms were ignorant of the various office-bearers in the Engliſh hierarchy, which was far from being the caſe, as many, yea, the moſt part of them, had ſeen it exemplified before their face: But, even granting it, a very few hours, may give any man a competent knowledge of all theſe office-bearers therein enumerated.

His laſt charge, is laid againſt the fourth article of the ſolemn league; concerning their engaging *to diſcover, in order to be brought to public trial,* &c. In this article, he alledges, they bound themſelves to inform, *even* againſt theſe, who, from a *principle of conſcience*, oppoſed ſome of their religious principles. As this ſeems to be a principal objection, I ſhall anſwer it, as plainly as I can.

It is readily acknowledged, that in this article, our anceſtors did *blend civil* and *religious* matters together; and, perhaps, in their ſituation, it was not ſo eaſily avoided, as ſome may imagine. But it cannot be evinced, that this article contains an engagement, to deliver up to civil pains, to ſcaffolds, and gibbets, *merely for religious ſentiments.* From any acquaintance I have with the hiſtory of theſe times, it appears to me, that Papiſts and Epiſcopalians were the perſons they had principally in their eye: But both of theſe, they apprehended, were for introducing, the one Popery, and both of them arbitrary power; for depriving the ſubjects of liberty, civil and religious. It may be ſaid, this was only an apprehenſion. I anſwer; Succeeding events abundantly juſtified the apprehenſion: For, not many years after, when the very perſons they had in their view got power into their hands, and again ſeized the reins of government; we know very well, how much Popery was careſſed, and arbitrary power graſped at; to the depriving the ſubjects of liberty, civil and religious, and many of life itſelf. Now, theſe are the

very perſons mentioned expreſly in the fourth article of the ſolemn league; *Incendiaries, dividing the king from his people, or one of the kingdoms from another.* And as the ſame perſons were enemies both to their civil and religious liberty, this might be the cauſe, in part, of leading them to intermix civil and religious matters; in which, it is readily owned, they were wrong.

It is true, likewiſe, there were civil ſtatutes enacted, ſanguinary enough. But, ſome who lived nearer that period, and had better acceſs to know, inform us, that they were only intended *in terrorem*, as they expreſs it, to be a reſtraint, like our penal ſtatutes againſt Popery for a number of years paſt: And, (although the Seceſſion do not approve, more than the Relief, of all the reſtrictions which they really intended, on theſe who differed from them in religious matters), that they never intended to put theſe ſanguinary laws in execution, unleſs they were forced to it, by open attacks on their privileges, *civil* as well as *religious*; and even the moſt liberal *modern* ſentiments will admit, that civil pains are requiſite in ſuch a caſe.

Mr. H——n tells us, that he believes they honeſtly intended to put them in execution. I as verily believe, that though they did intend reſtrictions more rigorous than I can approve of, they never did intend to execute *fully* theſe ſevere ſtatutes, *merely* on account of perſons maintaining religious ſentiments, *inconſiſtent* with their wiſhed-for *uniformity*.

He alledges, indeed, that perſons do not conſider, that this apology deeply affects their integrity, and involves them in ſevenfold guilt. '*For*,' adds he, page 173, '*in the fourth article of the ſolemn league, they ſwore, in terms moſt expreſs, to inform the government againſt thoſe that oppoſed the league, that they might be brought to condign puniſhment. And, if they never meant to get theſe ſanguinary ſtatutes executed, they were guilty of downright perjury.*'

Here I cannot help differing from our Author; for, firſt, in that article it was enemies to the league in CIVIL, as well as religious matters, whom they engaged to diſcover; but this can never be a proof, that they meant to execute theſe laws in all their rigour, *merely* for religious ſentiments. Secondly, the fourth article has not the remoteſt hint, of diſcovering them

to be puniſhed according to all the extent of theſe ſevere ſtatutes; but, '*as the ſupreme judicatories of both kingdoms ſhould judge convenient.*' This is juſt as expreſs, as words can well be, that they did not ſwear to execute theſe ſtatutes in all their *ſeverity*; but to leave it to the DISCRETION, of the ſupreme judicatories of both kingdoms: And it is well known, that the ſupreme judicatory of a kingdom, do not always judge it convenient, to execute every penal ſtatute in all its rigour. When have our ſupreme judicatory judged it convenient, to execute the penal ſtatutes againſt Popery, in all their extent? To enact a ſtatute principally *in terrorem*, and ſwear to execute it, ONLY as far, as the ſupreme judicatory of the kindom ſhall judge convenient; how this ſhould be *downright perjury*, I know not: In my view, no charge can be more groundleſs.

Perhaps, it will be ſaid, they certainly did intend to preſs their covenant, by compulſory methods. Be it ſo. Were our covenants the worſe *in themſelves*, although there might be ſome abuſe or extremes in the management of them? What has been more abuſed than the Bible? Muſt we therefore reject it? And I know no principles adopted by the Seceſſion, more than by the Relief, which oblige them to defend any extremes, that our worthy anceſtors might be in a manner forced into. It is a very eaſy matter, however, for us to ſit under our vine and fig-tree, where there is nothing to make us afraid, and revile our godly anceſtors, for the methods they had recourſe unto, for their own preſervation, when their privileges, civil and religious, and *life* itſelf were in the utmoſt danger. Did we conſider their critical ſituation, we would, perhaps, ſee leſs reaſon to rage and revile, or even think it ſtrange, although, in ſome particulars, they ſhould have exceeded.

But ſtill it may be ſaid, that if they intended to enforce their covenants by compulſory methods, this certainly renders the meaning of the fourth article doubtful, and all ambiguity ſhould be avoided in a ſolemn oath. Be it ſo. It is the *expreſſions*, and not their *intentions*, we are concerned with: And no ſuch thing is contained in the words themſelves. Beſides, when a body of men have declared publicly to the world, in what SENSE they underſtand the words, when every corner of the kingdom rings with their SENSE of them, is it *reaſonable*, is it *candid*, or *Chriſtian-like*,

to charge them with ambiguity; or load them with disagreeable consequences, drawn from a different *sense* of the words, which they publicly disclaim? All that can be reasonably argued from this article, as it stands, is, that *civil* and *religious* matters are intermingled; and this can neither invalidate the covenant itself, nor disannul its obligation; and both sides of the Secession have publicly declared their disapprobation of this mixture.

I may add, that in whatever manner our ancestors intended to press covenanting, since this is not contained in the oath itself, his reasoning is far from being as clear as he imagines, about their swearing to destroy that liberty wherewith '*Christ* '*has made New-Testament worshippers free, which he procured* '*for them by his death, bequeathed—in his blessed word.*' Beside, as Mr. Ramsay has very justly observed: What Mr. H——n pleads for as Christian liberty, is the natural privilege of every man; of the Papist, as well as the Protestant: The wildest savage in America, has as good a right to judge for himself, as Mr. H——n, although he is not privileged with the same means for enabling him to judge aright.

He likewise insinuates, page 142, *That our temporal emoluments, influence us to maintain such principles.* I answer; There are, perhaps, but few Seceding clergymen, who do not enter the pulpit as wealthy, in things temporal, as they leave it, unless providence lay it to their hand some other way than by the emoluments he mentions. It may be, not a few of them lay their account, that there latter-will may be summed up in that saying of the prophet, *Leave thy fatherless children, I will preserve them alive*, &c. Jer. xlix. 11. Were we to lay aside these principles, and sacrifice our judgment and conscience, by making the humour of the day our creed; we apprehend very little difficulty, in making our temporal emoluments equal the Relief.—The reader may judge, whether a congregation telling the Presbytery, that they propose to give their minister, £. 50. or 60. yearly; or a good valid deed, for £. 80. or an 100, is the greatest temptation to maintain a particular set of principles.

I may add, the reader, who has consulted what has been already published on this controversy, may remember, that Mr. Ramsay, in his first performance, among other particulars, had taken some notice of Relief emoluments. Well, Mr.

H——n in his appendix, can give no milder epithets, than *officious, intruſive, intermeddler, a buſy body, a practice which few chimney-ſweeps would not think below their character.*

Now, I might aſk, if it can poſſibly alter the nature of the thing itſelf, becauſe it is perpetrated by Burgher, Antiburgher, or Reliever? If it cannot, Mr. H——n is in the ſame condemnation with his opponent; and with his own lips, has denounced his own doom, *officious, intruſive, intermeddler,* &c. Alas! what influence has bad example on the beſt.

The reader will, perhaps, by this time apprehend, that Mr. H——n is againſt covenanting altogether; but he is not. In page 145, we have the *form* of a *covenant, bond, ſubſcription, occaſion,* and *deſign* of it; all which he deſcribes at ſome length, and highly applauds. And the principal difference between Mr. H——n's covenant, and the covenants of our anceſtors is, (1.) His muſt be a *Relief covenant;* it muſt be ſuch, that Proteſtants of almoſt every denomination may ſubſcribe it. (2.) There muſt be no formality of *an oath.* From this, one is tempted to think, that although it is the *oſtenſible objection* to our covenants, that they are not enjoined by any particular precept in the New Teſtament, the *real quarrel* is, that they are not Relief covenants. I aſk, Was this method of covenanting, which he ſo much approves of, and applauds, ever practiſed by the holy Jeſus himſelf, or by his venerable apoſtles? Was it ever enjoined by any particular precept, in all that full and explicit account which is given us of every moral duty, either in the Old or New Teſtament? Was it ever exemplified under either Teſtament? Or, for many hundreds of years after the apoſtles times? It will be ſaid, however, that this covenant does not include any act of religious worſhip; the formality of an oath is diſcarded. Be it ſo. If it is not a *firſt,* it muſt be a *ſecond* table duty, or a human invention; and the ſcripture is equally explicit on firſt and ſecond-table duties; but not a ſingle word of ſuch a covenant, or bond, either in the Old or New Teſtement. If this covenant, therefore, does not ſimbolize with Papiſts, in acts of will-worſhip, it evidently does ſo in works of ſupererogation, or beyond what the word of God requires. If the want of a particular precept in the New Teſtament, enjoining our covenants, were Mr. H——n's *real objection* to them; he would have repro-

bated his own covenant for the ſame reaſon, that it is neither enjoined, nor exemplified, in the whole word of God. Of conſequence, whatever noiſe he makes concerning this, there muſt be ſome other reaſon, and the reader may very eaſily judge what it is. His principal quarrel with our covenants, in this ſecond diviſion of his fifth general branch is, *That our anceſtors could not ſwear them in judgment.* I anſwer: There are none of the particulars he mentions, but it is very eaſy to diſcern, that they have no *foundation* in the word of God; and why be at a loſs to abjure them? Beſides, a very little pains, may give any man of common intellectuals, a competent knowledge of them. I have not yet ſeen any ſolid reaſon advanced, for charging the Britiſh ſubjects, in the laſt century, with the ſin of ignorant ſwearing: But the reader may judge, if there is not ſome reaſon to charge them in this century, with the ſin of SLANDEROUSLY reproaching their godly anceſtors.—I ſhall now conſider his laſt general branch.

VI. '*I now proceed, to conſider the uſe that is made of co-*
'*venanting, in the Seceſſion in Scotland.*'

As our Antiburgher brethren carry this matter higheſt; they have the honour of the firſt place. They have no occaſion for my aſſiſtance, to anſwer his objections. If he pleaſe to conſult Mr. Ramſay's Review, he may ſee them very judiciouſly anſwered already. He tells us of ſeveral of the Antiburgher ſtudents lamenting, with tears, their ignorant covenanting. Perhaps, ſome will be ready to apprehend, that this is no very *doughty* objection to covenanting. He likewiſe enumerates a long ſeries of particulars in the confeſſion of ſins, which he inſinuates they do not underſtand. I anſwer: This does not militate againſt covenanting at all; but only againſt ſome particulars introduced into the confeſſion of ſins. But, is it impracticable to make goſpel hearers underſtand *any* of the particulars which he mentions. We ought then to give over informing our hearers, and cautioning them againſt the errors of Deiſts, Arians, Arminians, Independents, or ſhewing them the divine right of Preſbytery: for all theſe he inſinuates, our brethren cannot underſtand; but they have common ſagacity like other men. If his objection is ſolid, it is in vain to in-

ſtruct our hearers concerning any of theſe points; it is to demand implicit faith of them, for they cannot underſtand them. And why ſhould he be at ſo much pains to unfold, and defend *his own ſeſquepedale Latitudinarianiſm?* For he ſtrongly inſinuates, that goſpel-hearers cannot underſtand what it means. Why ſhould he take parents bound to our Confeſſion, in the baptiſm of their children? For he alledges, they cannot well underſtand what Preſbytery itſelf is. He may conſider, how he will avoid the force of his own argument. I need not inſiſt on this, as, I am certain, our brethren can be at no loſs to anſwer him.

He next proceeds to ſhew, what *uſe* is made of theſe covenants by the Burghers. And firſt he aſſerts, *That the Burghers were equally active, with the Antiburghers, in eſtabliſhing covenanting as a term of communion.* I aſk, how came he to know this? I am certain, there is not a Seceder, the moſt ignorant, but may ſwear every article of *their* covenant, with as much knowledge, as *he* could publiſh this aſſertion. And, beſides, with reſpect to ſome of the Burghers, it was not the caſe. Men may yield to an act for the ſake of peace, and not be very active in framing it. This is of a piece with his maintaining, that the Independents were equally active, with Preſbyterians, in framing the xxvith chap. of the Confeſſion; of which afterwards.

But, it is his principal quarrel with the Burghers, that they are guilty of a *ſtrange abſurdity;* becauſe they own covenanting is a moral duty, but never practiſe it. He acknowledges, indeed, that we maintain it as an *occaſional* duty, and that *this* is not a ſeaſon in which it is called for. So far he is right.—When one conſiders Mr. H———n's high pretenſions, it can ſcarcely be thought, that he is quite ignorant of the difference between a *ſtated* and an *occaſional* duty: And it is as harſh to conclude, that he would deſignedly blindfold and bewilder his reader; but from his deſcant on occaſional duties, one or other of theſe muſt follow.—I have already conſidered this particular at ſome length *, and ſet the difference between an *occaſional* and *ſtated* duty, in ſuch a light, as may be obvious to the meaneſt capacity; and have no occaſion to inſiſt on it now.

* See the Sermons, p. 10,—17.

Here, however, he makes a prodigious bluſter, '*What a* '*ſhame is it, for any body of men, to plead for covenanting,* '*as a moral duty, and for a whole life-time make no conſcience* '*of performing it!*' This is nearly repeating, what one of his *tearing* bewailers of ignorant covenanting, has long ago publiſhed to the world; and I have anſwered it already, much more fully than it deſerves.

He adds, '*Were I to take the advantage, which their pro-* '*feſſed principles and known practice about covenanting give* '*me, it might be maintained, upon their own principles, that* '*there is not a* REAL CHRISTIAN *in the whole Burgher* '*party: For, I maintain, in perfect agreeableneſs to the word* '*of God, that to live and die in the conſtant and habitual ne-* '*glect of any known and acknowledged duty of the holy law of* '*God, is inconſiſtent with a gracious ſtate and character.*' He acknowledges, indeed, that the character of many of us, forbids the concluſion.

I own, I could ſcarcely retain gravity, either in reading, or anſwering, this heavy charge. It will be granted, that covenanting was a known, and acknowledged duty under the Old Teſtament. Well, had Mr. H——n been admitted to the dying-beds of theſe venerable ſeers, Samuel, Elijah, Eliſha, *&c.* he would have addreſſed them in a very peremptory manner; *I can prove to your face, that you cannot be in a gracious ſtate, for you have lived in the conſtant and habitual neglect of a known and acknowledged duty,* and ſo might have ſtaggered the faith of dying prophets, on the brink of another world. Had he witneſſed the laſt moments of theſe eminently pious princes, David, Jehoſhaphat, Hezekiah, *&c.* he would have addreſſed them in the ſame ſtrain.

Mr. H——n's reaſoning, concerning occaſional duties, puts me in rememberance of what is ſtoried, concerning one blind from his birth. His friends were very fond to give him ſome notion of the magnitude and ſplendour of the natural ſun; after much pains, he replied, O! I know what he is like now, he is juſt like thunder. Such, are Mr. H——n's reaſonings, about occaſional duties. Were I to take the advantage which his poſition affords me, it might be maintained, that according to his own reaſoning, he cannot be a real Chriſtian. It will be allowed, that it is a known duty of the holy law of God;

for a man to train up his children in the fear of the Lord, it is expreſly enjoined in the New Teſtament. But, Mr. H——n has hitherto lived, in the conſtant neglect of it, and many do ſo all their *life-time*. It will be anſwered, that this is a duty which depends on circumſtances; and therefore, the concluſion is falſe. I readily grant it is true; but ſo does every occaſional duty depend upon circumſtances; and covenanting among the reſt, and therefore, Mr. H——n's concluſion is of the very ſame ſort, quite a ſophiſm.

But ſtill he charges us with another abſurdity, namely, that we exclude from the Lord's table, theſe who do not own covenanting to be a moral duty; but we never practiſe it. I ſhall give this the mild, and polite epithet of a *miſtake*. There is a very wide difference, between excluding theſe who openly oppoſe, ridicule, and revile our covenants, and theſe who may not be very clear about the morality of them.

Theſe are Mr. H——n's arguments againſt covenanting: I have endeavoured to anſwer every one of them; with what ſucceſs, the reader may judge for himſelf.

Mr. H——n cannot be ſatisfied with belabouring Seceding Miniſters concerning covenanting; he has likewiſe a very heavy charge againſt our hearers, namely, that they are bigotted, and ſhut their eyes againſt the light. It is no great compliment to the public, when, in order to prove this charge, he entertains his reader with a packman's tale, about a Seceder reading, or not reading the new's paper. And, beſides, who is obliged to give him credit? And though it were true, will the foible of an individual, characteriſe a whole body? It will perhaps appear afterwards, that few are more bigotted, than Relief miniſters themſelves.

He owns, that Seceder Miniſters are orthodox; '*But it 'were to be wiſhed, that they were a little more full and ex-'plicit, on the preceptive and practical part of religion.*' I anſwer; If Relief miniſters are not more explicit from the pulpit, than from the preſs; Seceders are as explicit, on precept and practice, as they are; although the manner may be ſomething different. This leads me to ſuſpect, that it is Seceders he has in his eye, page 54, where he tells us of two unhappy defects in preaching. The firſt is preaching the doctrines of the goſpel; but ſeldom illuſtrating the practical part. The other is

the very reverſe of this, inſiſting always on duties. It is evident enough, that it is Seceders whom he charges with neglecting the practical part; and alledges, that we have perverted the taſte of our hearers, becauſe the doctrines of the goſpel are agreeable to them; but they are not very fond of moral harangues. He is ſo obliging, however, as to direct them to read the *practical* part of Paul's epiſtles, in order to rectify their miſtake. I hope, he does not mean, that they ſhould overlook the *doctrinal* part. I apprehend, there is no Seceder who underſtands what he hears, who will not deſpiſe this groundleſs charge againſt his teachers. I can aſſure our Author, that however perverted the taſte of our hearers may be, they are uſually entertained with diſcourſes as practical, (I mean not Neonomian, but goſpel practice) as any the preſs has produced as yet from a different quarter; the nature and genius of the kingdom of Chriſt not excepted.—Theſe two defects, he is *afraid, are like two fatal gangrenes, conſuming many in this generation.*

This account of modern preaching, appears to me, at leaſt, a very defective one. The firſt he mentions, is a non-entity at this day; he may aſſert it, but I put him to a defiance to document it. The ſecond, indeed, may conſume like a congrene; but there is a third method of preaching, which he quite overlooks, and which is a gangrene, perhaps more conſumptive at preſent than open legality. I mean, Neonomian and Arminian tenets, concealed with flaming pretenſions to the purity of goſpel doctrine. This is much more likely to ſubvert the ſimple, than when the maſk is honeſtly laid aſide. Mr. H——n's account of the nature and genius of the kingdom of Chriſt, affords matter for numerous animadverſions; but, as I propoſed to confine myſelf to his objections againſt covenanting, I ſhall now take my leave of it.

As the particulars in this ſection are ſo numerous, I have ſtudied as much brevity as in my power; and on this account, perhaps, ſometimes not as plain as I could have wiſhed. One of my brethren, who did me kindneſs to look over the proof ſheet, ſuggeſted to me, that a few ſentences at the bottom of page 62, were ſomewhat obſcure. The meaning is this: Mr. H——n alledges, that *giving themſelves to the Lord*, may mean their doing ſo in the ſacrament of the ſupper. What-

ever be the meaning, it appears plain to me, that the apoſtle did not expect that they would do this FIRST, or *before* their contribution. It is equally evident, the apoſtle apprehended, that they would take longer time to have their contribution in readineſs; and accordingly informs us, chap. ix. 2. that he made the forwardneſs of Achaia, an argument with them. Now, as the ſacrament was then very frequently diſpenſed, and the apoſtle apprehended they would take longer time to have their contribution in readineſs, if the ſacrament of the ſupper were intended, the apoſtle would rather have expected, that they would celebrate it once and again, before their contribution was made up. But, he did not expect, that they would FIRST *give themſelves to the Lord;* and therefore, ſomething elſe would ſeem to be intended by it. The reader muſt judge for himſelf, if the argument is juſt; but the meaning is plain.

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SECT. II.

Containing Animadverſions, on the Compendious View of the Religious Syſtem, maintained by the Synod of Relief.

AFTER the ſtrong inſinuations, mentioned in the cloſe of the preceding Section; it cannot be deemed rude, or unreaſonable, to conſider ſhortly the ſcheme of doctrine taught in the ſynod of Relief; as it is exhibited in their publications. The Compendious View, *&c.* has been very judicioſly anſwered already *; but as the groundleſs charges againſt Seceders are more numerous, than could well be conſidered in a ſhort review; and, as I took no notice of them in the preceding ſermon, but ſuch as were connected with my ſubject; it may not be unneceſſary to offer ſome further remarks on that ſingular performance. I ſhall follow our Author's own plan, and begin with his *religious* ſyſtem.

* Mr. Ramſay's Review.

We are told, page 8, '*The reſt of the human race, were 'paſſed by in the decree of election.*' Here, he evidently confounds the decree of *election*, with the decree of *reprobation*. The decree of election reſpects the *Elect only*, being that eternal purpoſe of God, whereby he choſe them *in Chriſt Jeſus* unto eternal life. The paſſing by the reſt of mankind, is no part of the decree of election; but belongs to the decree of reprobation, or *dereliction*, if *reprobation* is thought an unpleaſant ſound.

He adds, They '*were left to poſſeſs that heritage of wrath, 'to which they are born, as deſcendents of Adam, and under 'the covenant of works.*' Here he repreſents the ſin of nature, in virtue of their connection with the firſt Adam, as the *ſole* cauſe, why the wicked are left to poſſeſs the heritage of wrath. But the wicked have their heritage of wrath appointed them, and are left to poſſeſs it; not only as that to which they are born as deſcendents of the firſt Adam; but likewiſe as that which is due to all their actual tranſgreſſions, in all their aggravated circumſtances.

We are told, page 9, That '*He*' (*viz.* the Saviour) '*was 'not included in Adam's federal repreſentation,* THAT *he might 'be free from the imputation of his ſin.*' This point of doctrine, in my view, is likewiſe miſrepreſented. According to this account of it, our Lord's human nature might have been *included* in Adam's federal repreſentation, but was not, THAT he might be free from the imputation of his ſin. Inſtead of this, the Saviour could not be included in Adam's repreſentation; and this is an undoubted evidence, that he was free from the imputation of Adam's ſin FOR HIMSELF, although laid on him, with the other ſins of his people, as their ſubſtitute Surety. In his divine nature, He is the moſt High God, whom Adam could not repreſent. His human nature, never was a perſon, for in the moment body and ſoul were united in the womb of the virgin, both were united unto, and received ſubſiſtence in his divine perſon. Now, it was not mere *natures*, ſo to ſpeak, but the *perſons* of all his offspring, whom Adam either did, or could repreſent: And as the Redeemer's human nature never was a perſon, it could not poſſibly be repreſented by Adam; but, according to Mr. H——n, He *might* have been repreſented, but *was* not.

In page 10. he repreſents the hypoſtatical union, and conſequently the union between the Saviour's body and ſoul, as commencing the very moment of his ſupernatural conception. It is not alleged, that the ſouls of infants are united to their bodies, till ſome time after the moment of conception. The body is firſt formed in all its parts, and fitted up as a proper receptacle for the ſoul, before that heavenly inhabitant be lodged in it. And we have no ground from the word of God to conclude, that Chriſt's bleſſed body was quickened in the virgin's womb, by being united with his ſoul, *ſooner* than is the caſe with other infants: Yea, we are expreſly told by the apoſtle, That *He was made in* ALL *things, like unto his brethren, ſin only excepted;* and conſequently in the time of the union of the ſoul with the body, which certainly is not ſin.

In page 11. we have the dignity of the Redeemer's perſon aſſigned as the *only* reaſon why his ſufferings were not eternal. '*That they were not eternal, was owing to the infinite dignity* '*of the ſufferer.*' I mean, not to blame him, for mentioning this as one reaſon: But to mention no other reaſon, why his ſufferings were not eternal, is exceedingly defective on ſuch a momentuous point of doctrine. He mentions both before and after, that Chriſt paid his people's debt of ſuffering; that He endured the puniſhment which was due unto their ſin; but does not mention this as a reaſon why his ſufferings were not eternal, although it is a principal one: For, when the debt was fully paid, his ſufferings could not in juſtice be continued. It was the *infinite greatneſs* of the Saviour's ſufferings, which was the principal reaſon why they were not eternal; and ought, *at leaſt*, to be always joined with the dignity of the ſufferer. Jehovah's infinite wrath was contained in the threatening; and whoever was the ſufferer, if this infinite wrath was not endured, he could not be acquitted. But this infinite wrath being exhauſted, whoever was the ſufferer, he could not be detained, to have further puniſhment inflicted. Whatever value the dignity of the ſufferer might ſtamp upon his ſufferings, the unrelenting law knows neither mercy, nor mitigation; it will not ſpare the Son more than the ſlave: It knows nothing of compromiſing matters; it muſt have the very thing which it demands, or it will by no means clear the guilty. Accordingly, the Son of God's love, could not be ſpared, or acquitted on

the footing of an equivalent, as ſome talk; No: The *infinity* of divine wrath behoved to be endured, till he could ſay on the tree, not merely the *dignity* of the ſufferer is infinite, but IT IS FINISHED. This is the true reaſon why his ſufferings were not eternal, as a Surety anſwering the bond of the inſolvent debtor, is the reaſon of his acquitment. It is readily granted, that our Redeemer, being the moſt High God, was the reaſon of his being able to endure infinite wrath; and we cannot be too careful to direct the meditation and faith of our hearers to the dignity of his perſon. But neither can we be too diligent, to give them diſtinct views of the Saviour having anſwered every demand of the law, unto the very uttermoſt; and that on this very footing, He was acquitted as their Surety. To aſcribe the non-eternity of his ſufferings ONLY to the dignity of his perſon, is to conceal the juſtice of God, the unalterable nature of his holy law, and to conceal one principal ground for ſolid peace of conſcience, when the ſinner not only beholds a Saviour, whoſe dignity is infinite, but who has anſwered every article of the demands of the broken covenant, to the very uttermoſt. It is here, that conſcience finds ſolid peace. The ſcripture evidently aſcribes his being acquitted to ſomething elſe, beſides the dignity of the ſufferer: *Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he ſhall divide the ſpoil with the ſtrong:* And, why? Only on account of the *dignity* of the ſufferer? No; but alſo, *Becauſe he hath poured out his ſoul unto death,—and bare the ſins of many*, Iſa. liii. 12. Here the prophet aſcribes his being acquitted and rewarded, and of conſequence the non-eternity of his ſufferings, to his having endured the dreadful death, or anſwered every demand of the law, as the Surety of his people; the whole of his obedience and ſufferings being frequently expreſſed by his death, the finiſhing part of them. This ought always to be joined with the dignity of his perſon, as the reaſon why his ſufferings were not eternal. And when we aſk our hearers, why the Saviour's ſufferings were not eternal, ſince his people would have ſuffered for ever, if he had not fully diſcharged their debt-bond. Many of them can readily anſwer, that being GOD, as well as *Man*, He was *able*, and did endure infinite wrath at once. It is this, and not *merely* the DIGNITY of the ſufferer, which is the true reaſon why his ſufferings were not eternal.

Page 11, at the bottom, he affirms, that Chriſt died, '*to* '*purchaſe a certainty of ſalvation for his choſen ſeed.*' He is certainly right, in maintaining, that He did not die *merely* to purchaſe a *poſſibility* of ſalvation for *all mankind*, or to put them into a *ſalvable* condition. But we deſire to be informed, how the *certainty* of ſalvation could be the *matter* of a purchaſe? The Saviour died to purchaſe *ſalvation* ITSELF; and if ſalvation was not purchaſed, eternal ruin was certain. On the other hand, if ſalvation is purchaſed, the *certainty* of it follows unqueſtionably; unleſs we ſhould ſuppoſe that Jehovah may be unjuſt, or that although the Saviour was faithful in fulfilling the condition of the covenant, he may be unfaithful in the adminiſtration of it, and not confer the bleſſings he has purchaſed. It is hard to ſay, what purchaſing a *certainty* of ſalvation means. I hope, he does not mean, that a certainty of it is purchaſed on the footing of our complying with goſpel terms, ſuch as, repenting, believing, *&c.* which is a phraſe not uncommon with an Author whom he greatly applauds. This might paſs for a ſlip with another, but it is inexcuſable in one who could not put on greater airs of aſſurance, although he were ſeated in the chair of infallibility.

In page 13, giving an account of the ſcriptures, he plainly inverts the order which the Spirit of God ſets before us in the word; and which ſound divines have generally followed, as in our Leſſer Catechiſm, 'The ſcriptures principally teach, what 'man is to believe concerning God, and what duty He requires 'of man.' But our Author firſt tells us of the *duties*, and then of the *doctrines* to be believed. I hope, he does not mean, that we are firſt to *do*, and then to *believe*; or, that acceptable obedience may be antecedent to ſaving faith. To ſet obedience before faith, is to ſap the very foundation of goſpel doctrines, and an evidence we are ignorant of the goſpel ſcheme.

He likewiſe tells us, '*The ſame celeſtial oracles contain a* '*great variety of the moſt important doctrines, abſolutely ne-* '*ceſſary to be known, in order to the ſalvation of ſinners.*' But, how lame this account! The ſcriptures contain *all* the doctrines of ſalvation, whether of greater or leſs importance, abſolutely neceſſary to be known or not. Does he imagine that only theſe doctrines which he reckons of great importance,

and abſolutely neceſſary, are worth mentioning? The apoſtle aſſures us, that *all ſcripture is profitable.*

Page 17, he affirms, that '*The calls, commands, and in-*'*vitations of the word, are the ground of faith.*' Here he omits the principal and proper ground of faith, namely, the free *gift* and *grant* which is made of the Saviour, and ſalvation, in the doctrines and promiſes of the word. The *calls* and *commands*, afford a warrant to believe; or rather lay us under an indiſpenſible obligation to believe, otherwiſe we diſobey the expreſs command of God. But it is the goſpel gift and promiſe, which is the proper ground of faith, in believing on the Saviour whom heaven has provided: and the commands and calls, ſuppoſe the gift, and require us to receive it. The commands evidently, and perhaps the calls alſo, belong to the law; and to make the commands a ground of faith, is to confound the law and the goſpel. The goſpel reveals the object of faith; the law commands us to embrace it: the goſpel makes a gift of the Son, with all the bleſſings of his purchaſe; the law commands us to accept of the gift. In the goſpel, a gracious God publiſhes the glad tidings of ſalvation; in the law, he commands us to ſet to our ſeal to the truth of them. In the goſpel, he publiſhes ſuch gracious promiſes as theſe, *I will betrothe thee unto me for ever*, Hoſ. ii. 9. *I, even I, am he who blotteth out thine iniquities*, Iſa. xi. 3, 25. In the law, he commands us to believe theſe promiſes, with particular application to our own ſouls.—Here our Author omits the proper ground of faith, and ſubſtitutes the law in its room: But, *the law is not of faith*, and cannot be the ground of it.

In the ſame page, beſides, goſpel-hearers '*Improving the* '*right into real faith*,' (which is not very eaſily reconciled with man's utter inability, and the ſupernatural efficacy of divine grace), we are likewiſe told of *ſaving convictions* before regeneration: '*But ſooner or latter, where convictions are ſaving,* '*they iſſue in regeneration.*' According to this account, a man may have convictions which are SAVING, ten or twenty years before regeneration. It will be granted, that convictions before regeneration, muſt be antecedent to faith alſo. But if we may credit an inſpired apoſtle, *Whatſoever is not of faith is ſin, and cannot pleaſe God.* Is it poſſible for that to be ſaving

which is ſin, and cannot pleaſe God? We may then have a new diſinition of ſin, *ſomething which is ſaving*. If *the plowing of the wicked is ſin*, and his *prayer an abomination*; ſo are his *convictions* alſo, till his heart is renewed by the grace of God. Convictions are by the law; it is the goſpel which conveys all ſaving bleſſings. *Art thou a maſter in Iſrael, and knoweſt not theſe things?* How much is this doctrine calculated, to make ſinners ſatisfy themſelves without any ſolid peace of conſcience? Our convictions, may they ſay, are very ſtrong, they are ſurely ſaving; and, therefore, all is either well already, or ſhall certainly be ſo, we need not thus diſquiet ourſelves.

In page 18, he affirms, concerning juſtification and regeneration, 'The one reſpects the penalty of the law, and the puniſhment, which it threatens; the other reſpects the precepts of the law, and the obedience which it requires.' This is truly a confuſed diſtinction. If juſtification reſpect the *penalty* of the law, but not the *precepts* of it; it muſt likewiſe reſpect ONLY Chriſt's paſſive obedience, or his ſufferings; for it was in his ſufferings that He endured the penalty of the law to the uttermoſt. If this be ſo, it will natively follow, that ONLY Chriſt's *paſſive* obedience is, or can be placed to the ſinner's account in juſtification; for his enduring the penalty, which juſtification is ſaid to reſpect, is diſtinct from his active obedience to the precept. I remember it is an aſſertion of Mr. Baxter's, that only Chriſt's *paſſive* obedience, either is, or can be imputed to the ſinner; and of conſequence the ſinner muſt ſhift for himſelf, for an *active* juſtifying obedience to the precept. This is perhaps a principle of Mr. Weſley's ſtill; but Calviniſts have been accuſtomed to think far otherwiſe; namely, that juſtification reſpects the *precept* of the law juſt as much as the *penalty*; and that both the Saviour's paſſive and active obedience, or his *all perfect undivided righteouſneſs*, is imputed to the ſinner in his juſtification. It is true, he aſſerts almoſt with the ſame breath, that in juſtification the believer 'has a title to heaven.' But how can the ſinner have a title to heaven in juſtification, if it reſpects only the penalty of the law? If we muſt make diſtinctions here, the penalty endured, procures *only* freedom from the curſe; it is the Redeemer's obedience to the precept, imputed unto the ſinner, which conſtitutes his

title to heaven. The difference between regeneration and juſtification, does not at all conſiſt in what Mr. H——n here aſſerts; and his diſtinction can only confuſe and perplex an ignorant reader. Juſtification reſpects both the *precept* and the *penalty* of the law, as a broken covenant; the Saviour, *as our Surety*, having fully anſwered both, in the hand of God, as an *offended Judge*, his *undivided* righteouſneſs is imputed unto the ſinner in his juſtification; and hereby he is freed from the curſe, and entitled to eternal happineſs. Regeneration reſpects only the precept of the law, and not AS a *broken covenant*, but AS a *rule of life*, in the hands of a Mediator.

Juſtification, reſpecting the penalty, not the precept of the law; and yet the ſinner therein receiving a title to heaven, is not very eaſily underſtood by common capacities. There are ſome who exclude pardon from being a branch of our juſtification, perhaps through an itch to maintain their Chriſtian liberty of differing from our ſtandards; as it is not eaſy to ſee what other valuable end they propoſe by it. Here it is cut off from connexion with the precept, and cannot include a title to heaven; and, lo! between the two, the invaluable bleſſing is annihilated. It may, perhaps, be juſt as ſafe, and as edifying, to hold by the old-faſhioned account of it,—That it includes the *pardon* of all our ſins, and *acceptance* alſo, which equally reſpects the precept and the penalty.

In page 19, we are told, '*The righteouſneſs of Chriſt is imputed to the ſinner by God, at the time when it is received by faith. And when it is imputed to him,—it is ſo placed to his account, that it is as pleadable by him for acceptance with God and eternal life, as if it had been wrought out by him in his own perſon.*' Now, it is very true, it is as pleadable by the ſinner, as Mr. H——n aſſerts; and this has a very ſpecious appearance, but the conſequence is very diſagreeable. To ſay that it is placed *ſo* to his account, THAT it is as pleadable by him, as if he had wrought it out; plainly implies, that it is not pleadable by the ſinner *at all*; or, at leaſt, that it is not AS pleadable by him, as he had *wrought it out*, till it is thus placed to his account. In other words, it evidently makes imputation, and faith's reception, the foundation of the Surety's righteouſneſs being pleadable; or, at leaſt, of its being AS pleadable by the ſinner, as if himſelf had wrought it out. If words have any determinate mean-

ing, he mentions this as a fruit of faith and imputation. But the gift and grant of righteouſneſs in the word, renders the Surety's righteouſneſs as pleadable by ALL who hear the goſpel; AS if they had wrought it out in their own perſons: And the call and command of God, lays EVERY ONE of them under an indiſpenſible obligation to plead it; and if they do not, they ſet the authority of heaven at nought. And if Chriſt's righteouſneſs is not pleadable by *every one* who hears the goſpel, what are the unconverted to plead? What plea ſhould miniſters ſuggeſt unto them? But, perhaps, Mr. H——n will alledge, that he allows this righteouſneſs is pleadable by all; that in page 17, he has very expreſly aſſerted the freedom of the goſpel call. It is true, he has done ſo; but here he makes the Surety's righteouſneſs being pleadable, a fruit of faith and imputation: And if this is ſo, how can the goſpel call be free? It is requiſite in order to preach the goſpel, and particularly, in compoſing a religious ſyſtem, that we ſhould not only have ſome ſuitable views of particular doctrines in a detached way; but alſo of the order, connection, and dependence of theſe doctrines, leſt we ſhould at every turn ſet them at variance one with another; and then no man can tell, whether this or that is a branch of our ſyſtem.

But, if he allows of the freedom of the goſpel call, and that this righteouſneſs is pleadable by all, then his meaning certainly is, that its being AS PLEADABLE by the ſinner, AS if himſelf had wrought it out, is a fruit of imputation and faith. But, is this ſo? The righteouſneſs of Chriſt is brought near, *I* BRING NEAR *my righteouſneſs* *; gifted unto ſinners, *The gift of righteouſneſs*; and, *The gift of grace* †: this renders the Surety's righteouſneſs AS pleadable by every ſinner, who hears the goſpel, AS if he himſelf had wrought it out. And if it is not *as pleadable* by all, I aſk, how far is it pleadable by the unconverted? They have ſurely a right to be informed; and we are bound to inſtruct them. It muſt either be *not* pleadable by them at all, or *as pleadable* as if the ſinner had wrought it out. They may find a middle between theſe who can.

It is true, this righteouſneſs, being placed to the ſinner's account, in the day of believing, it is as much his in poſſeſſion,

* Iſa. xlvi. 13. † Rom. v. 15, 17.

by imputation, although it cannot be his inherently, as if himſelf had wrought it out: And ſatisfaction concerning its being his in poſſeſſion may be very encouraging to his faith, and animating to his ſoul in pleading this righteouſneſs. But although it is not the unconverted ſinner's in poſſeſſion, it is his in the gift, which conſtitutes a right of acceſs, and renders it *as pleadable*, as if himſelf had performed it. And, although it is the believer's in poſſeſſion, and ſatisfaction concerning this may encourage his faith, and animate his ſoul; I apprehend, he will find the gift of it in the word, directed to ſinners without exception, the ſureſt ground of his plea: For, although faith and imputation are not uncertain, the believer's ſatisfaction concerning them is very uncertain; and if his plea is founded upon theſe, what muſt become of it, when imputation and faith are hid from his eyes, in the dark night of deſertion?

And if it is not the free gift, but faith and imputation which render this righteouſneſs pleadable; ſuppoſe an unconverted ſinner ſhould apply to us under alarms of conſcience, what a melancholy ſcene behoved we to open to him! We behoved to tell him, here is an all-perfect righteouſneſs as pleadable by you, as if you had performed it, when once it is imputed and received. Might he not juſtly reply, Alas! you are ſent to me with heavy tidings; for I am a ſtranger to faith, and imputation alſo; and I can no more believe, than I can do and live? But to ſet the goſpel gift before him, rendering the Redeemer's righteouſneſs as pleadable by him, as if he himſelf had wrought it out; and the grace preſented in the free promiſe, to enable to receive the goſpel gift, and ſtrengthen him for every duty required, is the ſcripture-method of changing the ſtorm into a calm. And when the godly are in the dark, *faith*, *imputation*, *former experiences*, all out of view; how are we to be helpers of their joy, but by ſetting the gift of righteouſneſs in the word before them? In one word, if we loſe view of the free gift, rendering the Surety's righteouſneſs as pleadable by us as if we had performed it ourſelves, we loſe view of the very ſubſtance of the goſpel.

He adds, in the ſame page, '*In juſtification the believer not* '*only obtains a title to life,—but alſo a full—pardon of all his* '*ſins.*' Does our Author mean, that the ſinner is firſt entitled to heaven, and then his ſins pardoned? If ſo, he muſt be

entitled to heaven, and liable to hell at once. The order of our ſtandards is as conſiſtent, 'He pardoneth all our ſins, and 'accepteth of us as righteous.'

In the ſame page alſo he aſſerts, concerning the believer, '*He is freed from the precept of the law, as a covenant; be-*'*cauſe in the covenant of works, the law's precept was preſcrib-*'*ed to Adam as the foundation of a title to life, but it is not* '*preſcribed to the believer for this end in the goſpel.*'

It is certainly true, it is not preſcribed to the believer for this end; and goſpel preſcription of law-duties, is very ambiguous, to ſay no worſe of it: And we will perhaps meet with it more plainly expreſſed afterwards. But it is equally true, that goſpel truths ought to be exhibited, in the moſt plain and edifying manner; but it is far otherwiſe here. The plain reaſon why the believer is freed from the precepts of the law in its covenant form, is becauſe his Surety has fully anſwered all its demands in that form; and it can no more demand obedience of the believer in that form, in which his Surety has anſwered it, than the creditor can juſtly exact payment of the principal debtor, after his Surety has got up his debt bond. To tell the real Chriſtian, that he is freed from the precept of the law as a broken covenant, merely becauſe it is not *preſcribed* to him, is leaving him quite in the dark why it is not preſcribed to him. He may conjecture, that it is owing unto God mitigating, or abating the rigour of his law, expreſſions common enough with ſome; or to ſome act of ſovereign kindneſs, or he knows not what. This is juſt to wrap up this important article in obſcurity, and to conceal the principal reaſon why the believer is freed from the precept of the law in its covenant form; and that reaſon too which has the moſt powerful influence on the Chriſtian to obey the law as a rule. But let us tell the Chriſtian plainly, that his Surety has fully anſwered all the preceptive demands of the broken law, that hereby he is freed from it in its covenant form, that it *cannot* be preſcribed to him in this form; he at once ſees the reaſon of his freedom, and a moſt powerful excitement, as well as the purchaſe of all needful grace, to enable him to obey it as a rule of life.

In page 20, we have a branch of the marrow doctrine (as it is uſually ſtiled) introduced, namely, 'Whether all ſins 'are pardoned in juſtification; or only theſe already com-

'mitted?' I would desire the reader to remember, as I mean not always to be repeating it, that pardon of sin in justification, respects the *penalty* or *curse* of the broken law; and consists in the sinner being freed from the guilt of sin, or liableness to the curse here, and hell hereafter, on account of his iniquities. Mr. H——n allows, that it respects the penalty of the broken law. The reader will therefore remember, that fatherly pardons, and intimations of pardon, are out of the question; it is the pardon of sin in justification, respecting the *curse* of the broken covenant, we are now to consider. Our Author asserts, '*This controversy, like many others, has been very fruitless.*' He must allow us to think very differently, that few controversies have been the occasion of setting a greater number of gospel truths, in a clear and distinct point of view. According to him, it likewise '*consists rather in words than things.*' But is it only a strife of words, whether the believer can be under the covenant of GRACE, and the covenant of WORKS; entitled to HEAVEN, and condemned to HELL, at the very *same time?* If all his sins are not pardoned in justification, the consequence is unavoidable. If he is a real believer, he is certainly under the covenant of *grace;* but if any of his sins are unpardoned, he is as certainly under the covenant of *works:* For, it is the broken covenant which fixes the guilt of sin on the transgressor, which it cannot do, if he is not under it. If he is justified, he is certainly entitled to *heaven*, Mr. H——n allows it; but if any of his sins are unpardoned, he is as certainly liable to *hell;* for he must be under the broken law, and what things the law saith, it saith to these who are under it; but it saith, *Cursed is every one who continueth not* IN ALL THINGS. But all this, must be only a strife of words. If all sins are not pardoned in justification, it must be matter of fact, however, unless, as some maintain, the believer may be a child of God to-day, and entitled to heaven; and a child of Satan to-morrow, condemned to hell.

But, perhaps, Mr. H——n is of the same sentiments with Mr. Niel, Serm. page 405. '*There can be no actual pardon of sins, till they are committed and repented of.*' As this is an assertion not uncommon, and evidently connected with our present enquiry, I shall offer a remark or two concerning it.

One reaſon aſſigned why ſin cannot be pardoned till it is committed, and which is urged by ſome as *plain* and *unanſwerable*, is the following. *Sin*, is not *ſin*, till it is committed, it is a *non-entity*; and therefore cannot be pardoned. But if this prove any thing, it will prove by far too much; for, if it is ſolid reaſoning, we may well ſay, as the diſciples did in another caſe, *Who then can be ſaved?* If *ſin* is not *ſin*, but a non-entity till it is committed, and ſo cannot be pardoned; by a parity of reaſon, it is not *ſin*, and ſo can neither be *puniſhed*, nor *expiated*. The plain conſequence is, that all theſe who have lived, or ſhall live, after our Saviour accompliſhed his deceaſe at Jeruſalem, why their ſin was not ſin, it was not committed; and therefore could not be *laid upon him*, nor *expiated* by him. They muſt, therefore, anſwer to their own account, and the conſequence is no myſtery at all.—Again, if ſin is not ſin till it is committed, agreeable to the ſame reaſoning, *ſatisfaction* is no *ſatisfaction* till it is given, or performed; and the conſequence plain, that all theſe who lived before the Saviour's coming in the fleſh, their ſins could not be pardoned; for the Redeemer's righteouſneſs was no righteouſneſs till it was performed. We muſt therefore allow, either ſome *Limbus Patruum*, a priſon where the fathers were detained, till the Saviour ſuffered; or that their ſins are ſtill unexpiated. It will be ſaid, that Chriſt's ſatisfaction was ſuſtained, becauſe he could not fail in giving it, and the godly pardoned on that footing. This is very readily granted; but it is an evidence that righteouſneſs is not a non-entity before it is performed: And in like manner all the ſins of the whole elect of God, who lived ſince the Saviour's deceaſe, or who ſhall yet live, were laid upon him, and ſo an evidence, that it is not a non-entity before it is committed, but can be puniſhed; and as little inconſiſtency in its being pardoned. But, it is now time to hear Mr. H——n's account of this ſubject.

Page 20. '*In juſtification a complete and irrevocable pardon,* '*of all ſin already committed, is obtained. And the juſtified* '*believer, being now happily delivered out of his old-covenant* '*ſtate, and intereſted in the new covenant, and its glorious* '*head, ſuch is the nature, and contexture of the new covenant,* '*within the bond of which he is brought, that no ſins, which*

' *he afterwards commits, ever expoſe him to condemnation,*' " *For there is no condemnation to them that are in Chriſt Jeſus.*"

Here, we demand information, Sir, what you mean by a *complete*, and *incomplete* pardon of ſin; for, when you ſpeak of a *complete* pardon ONLY of ſins already committed, you do not ſeem to maintain, that *after-ſins* are not pardoned at all; and therefore muſt mean, that they are *incompletely* pardoned. My reaſon for apprehending that you do not maintain that after-ſins are not pardoned at all; is your aſſerting, page 19, that the believer obtains a FULL pardon of ALL his ſins in juſtification, and therefore, after-ſins are ſomehow pardoned, but not COMPLETELY. A complete and incomplete pardon of ſin is not very eaſily underſtood.

I am likewiſe at a loſs, Sir, to underſtand your diſtinction, between a FULL and a COMPLETE pardon of ſin. In page 19. you ſpeak of a *full* pardon of *all* ſin in juſtification; but in page 20. you tell us it is complete, *only* with reſpect to ſins already committed. It is certainly requiſite in writing a ſyſtem, that a man ſhould remember what he wrote the preceding page. The difference between a *full* and a *complete* pardon of ſin is exceedingly myſterious. If all ſin is not completely pardoned in juſtification, there is ſome reaſon, Sir, to apprehend, from what you have already granted, that it never can be completely pardoned. The ſenſe of pardon, or intimations of it, fatherly pardons, *&c.* are out of the queſtion: The pardon we now conſider reſpects the penalty, or curſe of the broken covenant. This you have granted. In juſtification the believer is freed from the penalty or curſe; and alſo from the precepts of the law *as a covenant*. This you have likewiſe granted. Now, how can the believer's after-ſins be pardoned, or even their pardon completed with reſpect to a covenant, from the precept and penalty of which, he is already ſet free? *What things the law ſaith, it ſaith to them that are under it;* but the believer, you grant, is not under the precept of the broken covenant; it can ſay nothing to him in the way of command: He is freed from the penalty of it; this you likewiſe grant, it can ſay nothing to him in the way of curſe, or condemnation. But, how, in the world, can the believer's ſins be pardoned, or even their pardon completed, with reſpect to a law, or covenant, which he is not under; and which can make no demands on

him neither for obedience nor ſatisfaction? It is juſt as inconſiſtent as to talk of a Britiſh ſubject, who never was out of the kingdom, being pardoned for violating the laws of other nations, which are not binding on him. If all ſin is not pardoned completely in juſtification, from what Mr. H——n has granted, it is evident the believer muſt go to heaven without a complete pardon.

According to Mr. H——n's account of this matter, the believer is never privileged with a *legal* pardon of his ſins committed after converſion. If you aſk, what I mean by a *legal* pardon? I anſwer, pardon with reſpect to the *law's penalty*, or curſe, as a broken covenant. It is generally allowed, that pardon, as well as acceptance, is an act of a judge. In juſtification, the law-magnifying righteouſneſs of the Surety (in fulfilling of which, he endured the curſe of the law to the very uttermoſt) being placed to the ſinner's account; all his ſins are pardoned with reſpect to the curſe of the broken law, which his Surety has endured in his room. Hence, ſays our Catechiſm, in juſtification he pardoneth *all our ſins*. This is LEGAL PARDON; and that it is as complete in the inſtant of juſtification, as ever it can be, may be evident from the two following conſiderations.

1. When the righteouſneſs of the Surety is placed to the ſinner's account, and is HIS in law-reckoning; in ſtricteſt juſtice, he is ſet free from the curſe of that law due unto *all his ſins*, or privileged with a legal pardon; for, law and juſtice have no further claim upon him for his *after*-ſins, but freely acquit the ſinner, a righteouſneſs being ſuſtained in his room, and placed to his account; by which his *after*, as well as his *former* ſins were completely expiated.

2. Being a *judicial act*, or ſentence of a judge, the ſinner is at *once* acquitted from the curſe due to ALL his ſins; and in this reſpect it differs from ſanctification, which is *gradually* promoted. The ſenſe, or comfort of pardon, the pardon of particular after-ſins, applied to the conſcience, fatherly pardons, *&c.* all theſe are out of the queſtion.

This may obviate an objection which may occur to ſome, namely, that Seceders have expreſſed themſelves much in the ſame way with Mr. H——n, on this point of doctrine, by aſſerting, 'That ſins paſt and preſent are pardoned, by a for-

'mal remiſſion of them; and ſins to come, by ſecuring a not-'imputing of them *.' I anſwer; That it is aſſerted immediately before, that ALL ſins are pardoned in juſtification, with reſpect unto liableneſs unto eternal wrath: In other words, that they are all *legally* pardoned; the *judicial ſentence* in juſtification extends unto them all. But, by ſins paſt and preſent being formally remitted, not only legal pardon is intended, but pardon applied unto the conſcience, as is very evident from the ſcripture annexed as a proof, Pſal. xxxii. 5. *I ſaid, I will confeſs my treſpaſſes unto the Lord; and thou forgaveſt the iniquity of my ſins.*' And, it is the legal pardon in juſtification extending to ALL ſin, which ſecures the *not-imputing* of after ſins. This is likewiſe evident from the text adduced as a proof, Rom. iv. 8. In the preceding verſe, it is ſaid, *Bleſſed are they whoſe iniquities are* FORGIVEN, *and whoſe ſins are covered.* They are forgiven, or *covered*, by a legal pardon of them in juſtification; and therefore it follows, ver. 8. *The Lord will not impute ſin*, becauſe it is already legally pardoned. So that the doctrine maintained, in this valuable performance, is juſt this. That ALL ſins are legally pardoned in juſtification; that pardon is, in ſome meaſure, applied to the conſcience with reſpect to ſins paſt and preſent; and that the legal pardon extending unto all ſin, ſecures the not-imputing of after-ſins. This cannot be what Mr. H——n means, for it is the very doctrine which he contemns, as a ſtrife of words.

Chaſtiſements for after-ſins, as violations of the law as a rule, the application of the pardon of particular after-ſins, applied unto the conſcience; fartherly pardons; this we readily grant takes place after they are committed, and is diſtinct from that pardon, which is a branch of God's juſtifying act. But that legal pardon, reſpecting the law as a broken covenant, condemning the ſinner to its curſe, which is a branch of God's juſtifying act, is *full* and *complete* in the inſtant of juſtification.

Now, according to Mr. H——n's account, the believer's after-ſins are not legally pardoned in juſtification; for *legal* pardon is complete at once, and it is only ſins *already* committed, which he allows are completely pardoned. And from

* Mr. Fiſher's Catechiſm on juſtification.

that time, the believer's after ſins, are only ſome how or other warded off by the nature, and contexture of the new covenant; which cannot conſtitute a legal pardon. But, wo will be unto us, if we ſtand before our Judge another day, deſtitute of a legal pardon of any of our ſins; the broken law will certainly take hold on us, and drag us to eternal miſery.

We likewiſe deſire to know, Sir, what it is about the nature and contexture of the new covenant, which preſerves the believer from being expoſed to condemnation for his *after-ſins*, if it is not this; *That in juſtification, a legal or complete pardon of all his ſins, with reſpect to the broken law, is granted him?* To ſay, as you do, it is the NATURE and CONTEXTURE of the new covenant, is a very pleaſant ſound; but it is in fact ſaying nothing at all, when you do not ſo much as attempt, to give us the remoteſt hint what it is. I am certain your connexions muſt be much more judicious than ours, or they muſt give you implicit faith for this aſſertion.

We readily approve of your maintaining, that the believer's after-ſins do not expoſe him to the condemnation of the broken law: But ſtill we aſſert, that it is a *legal*, or *complete* pardon which ſecures him againſt condemnation. But you aſſert, that ſins already committed are completely pardoned, and ſomething about the *nature* and *contexture* of the new covenant, *diſtinct* from a complete pardon of after ſins, which ſecures the believer againſt condemnation on account of them. And what is it? It is not eaſy to ſee, how a ſinner can be freed from the curſe and condemnation of the broken law, without a *legal complete* pardon of his ſins reſpecting that broken law. And, till you ſhew how a ſinner can be freed from the condemnation of the broken law, without a legal pardon of all his ſins, I muſt maintain, that it is the legal pardon of ALL his ſins, which frees him from condemnation; for every ſin not legally pardoned, the law will take him by the throat, ſaying, Pay what thou oweſt. In juſtification, ſins paſt and preſent are remitted, both in the court of *heaven*, and in the court of *conſcience*, as divines ſometimes expreſs themſelves; and the legal pardon extending to ALL ſins, ſecures againſt after condemnation.

In a word, after all you have ſaid, the queſtion returns, Was the complete pardon on account of which the ſinner is

freed from the curſe, granted in the day of believing; or is it granted time after time, as the ſins of the godly are committed? Till you ſay ſomething more explicit about the nature and contexture of the new covenant, this muſt be the queſtion. And if a *complete legal* pardon of all ſin is not granted in the day of believing, it muſt be granted time after time, as the after ſins of the godly are committed; and their juſtification never complete, till the happy moment arrive when they ſhall ſin no more. I readily grant, with reſpect to *particular after* ſins of the godly, that application of pardon, or remiſſion in the court of conſcience, fatherly pardons, *&c.* are granted time after time; but this is no branch of pardon in God's juſtifying act, nor any part of that controverſy which you call a ſtrife of words. Pardon in juſtification is an act of God as a Judge, but I apprehend you will not aſſert; that the application of pardon to the conſcience, intimations of pardon, *&c.* are judicial acts, or acts of God as a Judge.

If all ſins are not completely pardoned, with reſpect to the broken law in the day of believing; why ſhould you aſſert, page 21, '*It is the duty of his children, to pray for the pardon* '*of their ſins daily committed againſt the divine law, as the* '*rule of their obedience, and alſo, that they may obtain the ſenſe* '*of the primary pardon of ſin in the day of believing?*' The firſt branch of the duty here recommended, we chearfully approve of: But, according to your doctrine of pardon, Sir, the laſt branch is certainly very defective. If only ſins already committed are *completely* pardoned, in the day of believing; why ſhould not the godly pray for the *completion* of pardon, whatever it is; as well as for a ſenſe of the primary pardon? It ſeems ſtrange, that pardon in juſtification is *complete* only with reſpect to ſins *already* committed; but the godly are not to pray, that the pardon of their after-ſins may be *completed*, but only for the ſenſe of a former *incomplete* pardon. Pardon of their ſins, as violations of the law as a rule of life, is no branch of pardon in juſtification, and ſo can be no *completion* of it; for you grant, that juſtification reſpects the broken law, and its penalty. But, to the conſcience, thoroughly awakened, the ſenſe of an *incomplete* pardon will perhaps afford but very little ſolid comfort.

If all ſins are not pardoned in juſtification, why ſhould you

aſſert, page 22. '*Juſtification is an act of God, becauſe it is* '*perfect in the firſt moment of believing?*' You have formerly granted, that pardon is a branch of juſtification, juſtification is *perfect* the firſt moment of believing; but pardon is *perfect* or *complete* only with reſpect to ſins already committed, but give us no intimation *when* it is perfect, with reſpect to *after*-ſins. Juſtication perfect the firſt moment of believing, but pardon complete only with reſpect to ſins already committed, will probably ſeem a paradox to not a few.

I am afraid I have been too prolix; but if the particulars I have mentioned, are preſented to the reader's view at once; I apprehend it will not be very eaſy to reconcile Mr. H——n's doctrine on this article with ſcripture, or even with common ſenſe.—Juſtification reſpects the *penalty*, not the *precept* of the law; and of courſe reſpects the Redeemer's *ſufferings*, not his *obedience*, and yet gives the ſinner a *title* to heaven.—The goſpel call extends *unto all*; and yet it is *faith* and *imputation* which render Chriſt's righteouſneſs *pleadable* by the ſinner.—In juſtification the believer obtains a title to heaven, which he cannot loſe, and *then* a full, free, and irreverſible pardon of all his ſin.—A FULL pardon of all the believer's ſins is obtained in juſtification; yet this pardon is COMPLETE only with reſpect to ſins already committed.—The pardon of the believer's ſins after juſtification is *incomplete*, yet he is free from the *penalty* of the covenant of works, and ſo is not expoſed to condemnation.—The pardon of the believer's future ſins is *incomplete*, yet he is not to pray for the *completion* of it, but only for a ſenſe of an *incomplete* pardon.—Juſtification is *perfect* the firſt moment of believing, yet pardon is *complete* no man can tell when.——Put all theſe together, and perhaps a more confuſed account of ſuch an important article of goſpel doctrine, has ſeldom made its appearance, with *inſulting pretenſions* to orthodoxy. One is almoſt tempted to think, that Mr. H——n knows well enough, that the *marrow doctrine*, on this article, is not very agreeable to many well diſpoſed perſons in the eſtabliſhed church; and, therefore, could wiſh to do them the favour of leaving Paul bound, even at the expence of landing himſelf in amaze of confuſion. Be this as it will, if our Author's bravado at the concluſion of his treatiſe, '*What ſort of* '*truths do theſe men themſelves preach,*' is intended to inſinuate,

that theſe are the doctrines Seceders preach, he is certainly miſtaken. And whatever they preach, the doctrine of the goſpel, on this article, is the following. In juſtification, the righteouſneſs of Chriſt being placed to the ſinner's account, the broken law conſiders the ſinner *as one* who has anſwered all its demands; 'If one died for all, then were all dead:' Accordingly he is privileged with a *legal* pardon of ALL his ſins, or perfect freedom from liableneſs to the law's curſe; which is the very formal nature of pardon, reſpecting juſtification.

This is illuſtrated very particularly, by the judicious Mr. Boſton in his Miſcellany Queſtions. Having ſpoken of the believer being righteous in the ſight of God, with the very ſame righteouſneſs wherewith Chriſt is righteous, he adds, '*This o-*
'*bligeth theſe that acknowledge the immediate imputation of*
'*Chriſt's righteouſneſs to us, to acknowledge alſo our being re-*
'*puted, upon our union with him, to have ſuffered in him for*
'*all ſins paſt, preſent, and to come.*' And mentions their being *raiſed up in him*, which ſuppoſes they *died in him*; the apoſtle being *crucified* with him, *&c.* And then draws the concluſion, '*That a believer is reputed to have ſatisfied for*
'*all his ſins, paſt, preſent, and to come, at his union with*
'*Chriſt by faith; and conſequently, that all his ſins are then*
'*pardoned at once.*' On the ſame queſtion, the reader will find the ſcripture declarations, that *all ſins* are pardoned in juſtification, illuſtrated at large; ſuch as, Col. ii. 13. *Having forgiven you* ALL *treſpaſſes*. Pardon, is expreſſed in ſcripture, by a *not remembering*, and a gracious God declaring, concerning his people's ſins, without exception, that he will *not remember them*, Iſa. xliii. 25. It is expreſſed by a *not ſeeing*; *He* BEHOLDETH *not iniquity in Jacob*, Num. xxiii. 21. *Who forgiveth* ALL *thine iniquities*, Pſal. ciii. 3.—In theſe Miſcellanies the reader will alſo find objections to this doctrine very ſatisfyingly anſwered.

Had Mr. H——n told us, that by pardon he not only means legal pardon, in the court of heaven; but pardon applied in the court of conſcience, and that legal pardon extends unto all ſin; that ſin already committed is pardoned in the court of conſcience alſo; and that the legal pardon extending unto all

ſin, ſecures the non-imputation of after-ſins, we would then have underſtood him. But ſtill, although pardon applied to the conſcience, or renewed intimations of it by renewed actings of faith, are granted time after time, it is no branch of that controverſy, which he ſtiles a *ſtrife of words*; for it does not free the ſinner from the guilt of ſin, nor *complete* his freedom from it; it only affords him the ſenſe or comfort of it. But if any thing like this were his meaning, he would never have ſtated it in oppoſition unto the marrow doctrine; unleſs he oppoſes that which he does not underſtand. And if Mr. H——n can expreſs himſelf ſo looſly, when writing with all that deliberation, which is undoubtedly requiſite in compoſing a religious ſyſtem, there is ſome reaſon to ſuſpect, that at other times he will not be very cautious in attending to the purity of the goſpel. He indeed tells us, that he is perſuaded the goſpel is no where more purely preached than in the Relief. From the ſpecimen he has given, he muſt allow us to think otherwiſe. I own, that till I had occaſion of late to conſult their publications, I judged, in charity, that it was more purely preached than it is, as will appear ſtill more evident in the following Section.

SECT. III.

Containing Animadverſions on ſeveral other Relief Publications.

MR. H——n's confident boaſting of the purity of goſpel doctrine in the Relief, naturally leads me to conſider ſome of the ſermons of their miniſters, which the public are favoured with. The ſermons of the late Mr. Neil, might afford a volume of remarks; I can only notice a few particulars. Perhaps, Mr. H——n may brand me, as he has done Mr. Ramſay, with cruelty, impiety, tearing up the aſhes of the dead, *&c.* But, I aſk, how does it happen, that there

is no cruelty, or impiety, in tearing up the aſhes of the whole Weſtminſter Aſſembly of divines; and repreſenting them as guilty of the very worſt branch of Popery, as Mr. H——n has done? I likewiſe deſire to be informed, what it is about connection with the Relief, which renders the aſhes of the dead thus ſacred, that it is cruel impiety to take notice of any doctrinal miſtakes which they have maintained, which may be hurtful to the ſurviving? Till a ſatisfying anſwer is given to theſe queſtions, I cannot tell why it ſhould be impiety to rectify the miſtakes of Mr. Neil, more than of doctor Twiſs. I readily own, that Mr. Neil has been a man of no contemptible parts; and to queſtion his piety would be very unlike a Chriſtian: but ſurely his miſtakes may be corrected.

It is no uncommon thing with our friends in the Relief, to charge us with bigotry, want of charity, with being deſtitute of Catholic Love, of a Chriſtian Spirit, *&c.* But I know no denomination of Chriſtians who are more bigotted to their own ſcheme, or more uncharitable to theſe who differ from them, than the Relief.—I ſhall give my reaſon for ſaying ſo. Mr. Neil, in his diſcourſe on church fellowſhip, from 1 John i. 7. *If ye walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowſhip one with another*, &c. affirms, page 5. '*It is too evi-*
'*dent, that whatever love many in theſe days pretend to have*
'*to the followers of the bleſſed Jeſus, it is not extended unto*
'*all whom they have reaſon to believe bear his amiable image,*
'*but confined to ſuch who are of their own party name, and*
'*eſpouſe all their favourite tenets.*' I apprehend, no perſon can be at a loſs to know, that it is diſſenters of different denominations, whom he has here in his eye. One thing is certain, he could ſcarcely be ignorant, that all the different denominations of diſſenters, the Relief excepted, diſapprove of what he intended to eſtabliſh. Well, what is his charitable concluſion concerning them? We have it, p. 6, '*But unleſs we feel ourſelves*
'*ſweetly conſtrained to love all who hold to the eſſential articles*
'*of faith, and appear to love our Lord Jeſus in ſincerity, what-*
'*ever party name they ſuſtain, or though they differ from us*
'*in leſſer matters: Unleſs, I ſay, we love, or have a delight-*
'*ful complacency in all ſuch, ſo as to maintain Chriſtian com-*
'*munion with them, whatever pretences we may have to reli-*

'*gion, or the rules of morality, they are vain, we are yet in* '*our ſins, far from the kingdom of God, and have no intereſt* '*in the Saviour's propitiatory death and ſacrifice.*' Here he evidently confines not only *love*, but the *reality of religion* to his own party peculiarity. But, ſome may perhaps think, that he certainly does not mean communion in ſealing ordinances; but only communion in one another's gifts, graces, prayers, *&c.* which is the uſual acceptation of *Chriſtian communion*, as diſtinct from full *church communion*. But, he certainly knew beſt himſelf, what he meant by Chriſtian communion; and you may hear him, page 11. '*Chriſtian fellowſhip,* '*or communion, includes in it, joining together in the ſame ſo-* '*lemnities of public worſhip, inſtituted by our God and Saviour.*' The plain meaning then of what is here aſſerted, without the leaſt degree of ſtraining, is this, That *all ſuch* as will not join in ſealing ordinances, with *every one* whom they judge in charity to be acquainted with real godlineſs, all their pretences to religion are vain, they are yet in their ſins. Well enough did he know, that all the different diſſenters in Scotland, the Relief excepted, refuſe to join in ſealing ordinances with many whom they have reaſon to think are truly religious, for reaſons which we ſhall afterwards aſſign. And, on this account, all the different bodies of diſſenters are here declared to be yet *in their ſins, far from the kingdom of God, and deſtitute of an intereſt in the Redeemer's ſacrifice*. I have never ſeen any thing ſo ſhockingly uncharitable, in all the publications of the different parties in the kingdom. He is much worſe than the very thing he blames, namely, confining our *love* to theſe who eſpouſe our favourite tenets. It is well known, that joining in ſealing ordinances, with all whom we have reaſon to think are acquainted with religion, is not only a favourite, but a *diſtinguiſhing* tenet of the Relief: and here not only *love*, but the *reality of religion* is confined to the Relief Shibboleth. I appeal to every unprejudiced perſon, who conſiders what is here aſſerted, if the plain meaning of it is not this; that all who diſapprove of the Relief terms of communion, (as the reſt of the different denominations in Scotland do) their pretences to religion are vain, they are yet in their ſins, have no part in the Saviour's death. It is very ſtrange, that men ſhould make ſuch an hide-

ous outcry about uncharitable bigotry, when none are ſo chargeable with it as themſelves.

In Mr. Neil's Poſthumous volume, we have the purchaſe of ſalvation by the Redeemer's obedience and ſufferings ſometimes properly exhibited; and the Spirit's application ſometimes mentioned; but no particular account at all of the Saviour's diſpenſatory fulneſs of grace, or goſpel hearers urged to apply thereto as their furniture for every exerciſe and duty, as that which *only* can be *ſufficient* for them, as that *in which* they are called to be *ſtrong*; although the word of God aſſures us, that he received it *for men*, and that it is out of this fulneſs, that ſinners are to receive, and have all their wants ſupplied. But while the Redeemer's Mediatory fulneſs of grace is never particularly exhibited, and ſinners exhorted to apply thereto; the goſpel is neither fully, nor purely preached, nor can duties be enjoined in an evangelical manner. And although in theſe ſermons the *purchaſe* of ſalvation is at times illuſtrated, and the *application* by the holy Spirit ſometimes mentioned; our uſe of means, and manner of receiving the purchaſed bleſſings, are frequently urged in ſuch a manner, as appears to me quite inconſiſtent with the *freedom* of grace, either in the purchaſe or application.

Page 44, '*We infer, what great need we have of an intereſt* '*in the great Redeemer, to anſwer for our defects and failures,* '*in this part of our duty, as well as in others.*' This is certainly calculated to make goſpel hearers imagine, that they need an intereſt in the Redeemer, to anſwer *only* for ſome *defects* and *failures* in their duties: And that there may be much about their duties, which has no occaſion for any thing of this ſort. A doctrine very agreeable to the pride of depraved nature. But, wo will be unto us for ever, if our perſons and the whole of our duties are not perfumed with the incenſe of our Redeemer's merit and interceſſion.

In page 83, it is very juſtly obſerved, '*That the goſpel is* '*no new law.*' But, in page 85, we have the goſpel repreſented, as containing the whole of the *old law.* '*It is a vain* '*and impious tenet of the Antinomians, who aſſert, that the* '*goſpel is all promiſes, but requires no duties: Every one who* '*is acquainted with the ſcriptures, will ſee the fallacy of this;* '*for, it is plain to every body, that the goſpel requires of us*

'*various duties; ſuch as, we ſhould be daily in the exerciſe of an unfeigned repentance toward God, and faith in our Lord Jeſus Chriſt; daily mortifying the deeds of the body that we may live; to be often employed in the exerciſe of pure and fervent devotion; to be in the lively exerciſe of all the graces of the Spirit; and to walk in all the divine commands blamleſs.*'

Laſtly, '*The word* GOSPEL, *means the divine threatening. The Antinomians, as they aſſert, that the goſpel requires no duty, ſo they deny that it contains any threatenings. It is needleſs to ſpend time in confuting theſe enemies to holineſs, and eſpecially as I would hope, that there is none of that ſtamp here. I ſhall only take notice of what one juſtly obſerves, that the goſpel contains more threatenings than the law; hence, the word* damnation, *is but once uſed in the Old Teſtament, and it is uſed thirteen or fourteen times in the New. As the goſpel is full of gracious promiſes to all who believe and obey it, ſo it is full of many awful threatenings to the impenitent and unbelieving.*'

I have tranſcribed this paſſage at large, becauſe every one who has any tolerable acquaintance with goſpel doctrine, will ſee at once that it is a downright blending of law and goſpel; yea, repreſenting the goſpel as including the whole law, unfeigned repentance, faith, mortifying the deeds of the body, fervent devotion, the exerciſe of every grace, walking in all the divine commands blameleſs. What can the law require more? The law requires all theſe duties, and the goſpel preſents all neceſſary grace for the diſcharge of them, as a free privilege. Nor is the Chriſtian's obligation to obey the law as a rule hereby weakened, but the very reverſe. It is true, the word GOSPEL is ſometimes uſed in an extenſive ſenſe, as including the whole diſpenſation or adminiſtration of it; and in this ſenſe, it may be ſaid to include theſe things. But, it is equally true, that no ſound divine will uſe it in this ſenſe, when profeſſedly ſtating the difference between the law and the goſpel, or without intimating, that he is not ſpeaking of the goſpel in a ſtrict and proper ſenſe.

But perhaps it will be ſaid, that beſides all theſe duties, the law includes threatenings alſo. Well, we are here informed, that the goſpel not only contains, but that it is *full* of many

awful threatenings. Nay, that it contains more threatenings than the law; becauſe the word *damnation* is ſeldom uſed in the Old Teſtament, but often in the New; and conſequently is not the goſpel of ſalvation, but of damnation. If the goſpel contains more threatenings than the law, it would ſeem, that there are threatenings in the word of God, which are not included in the law: though that ſingle threatening, *In the day thou eateſt, thou ſhalt ſurely die*, includes every threatening in its boſom.

This likewiſe ſeems to imply, that the Old Teſtament is wholly the law; the New Teſtament wholly the goſpel. But, the goſpel was preached in the beginning of the Old Teſtament, in the firſt promiſe, *That the ſeed of the woman ſhould bruiſe the head of the ſerpent* [a]; and at the concluſion of it, *To you that fear my name, ſhall the ſun of righteouſneſs ariſe* [b]. The threatenings of the law was denounced in the beginning of the New Teſtament, *He ſhall burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire* [c]; and at the concluſion of it, *If any man ſhall add to theſe things, God ſhall add unto him the plagues which are written in this book* [d]. According to our Author's account of it, *The Lord laid on him the iniquities of us all*, is the law: *And curſed is every one who continueth not in all things*, is the goſpel. Nor can Mr. Neil mean by the *law*, the Old Teſtament: And by the *goſpel*, the New; for he allows, that the goſpel was preached under the Old Teſtament; and Antinomians do not aſſert, that there is neither precept nor threatening in the New Teſtament. In order to preach the goſpel purely, it is certainly requiſite to give goſpel-hearers a diſtinct view of the difference between the law and the goſpel. The law of God is perfect, and requires every duty: The goſpel is a free exhibition of a Saviour, and all the bleſſings of grace, to diſpoſe unto, and ſtrengthen for the diſcharge of duty, 'Unto you is born—*a Saviour* [e].' The goſpel promiſes eternal life through Chriſt, *The gift of God is eternal life, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord* [f]: The law denounces eternal burnings, if this ſalvation is finally rejected; *When the Lord Jeſus ſhall be revealed from heaven,—in flaming fire*, &c. [g] And if the law of God is perfect, what are the duties left to be preſcribed,

a Gen. iii. 15. *b* Mal. iv. 2. *c* Matth. iii. 12. *d* Rev. xxii. 18.
e Luke ii. 11. *f* Rom. vi. 23. *g* 2 Theſſ. i. 7, 8.

or threatenings denounced by the goſpel? According to this account given of it by Mr. Niel, no man can tell what is law, or what is goſpel; they are blended in confuſion: And it is hoped, that there is not one in a Relief aſſembly, who does not conſider the goſpel as requiring various duties, denouncing many awful threatenings; in a word, as including the whole law.

Here we have alſo the goſpel containing promiſes to theſe who believe; and dreadful threatenings to the impenitent. If this is not a new law, what can be ſo? Unleſs it be rather the old law with a goſpel deſignation. It is a law with promiſe and threatening, which differs very little from the covenant of works; except the want of a federal repreſentation. The promiſe is here confined, by Mr. Neil, to theſe who believe and obey; and it is true, there are promiſes to ſuch. But, is the promiſe, *I will take away the ſtoney heart* *, a promiſe to the obedient penitent believer? The apoſtle aſſures us, the promiſes are to all who hear the goſpel call †. *If he who believes not ſhall be damned*, is not a law-threatening, I know not what can be ſo.

His ſecond head of method, page 108, is, '*To ſhew that* '*none need to be deceived, if they take heed to themſelves.*' Is this like preaching the goſpel to blind ſinners, to vain man who would be wiſe, although born like the wild aſſe's colt? The Saviour aſſures us, *(If it were poſſible) they ſhall deceive the very elect* ‡. Which, I apprehend, plainly implies, that ſomething elſe beſides their taking heed to themſelves is requiſite, to preſerve the elect from being deceived. But, another aſſertion equally groſs, follows in the ſame page.

'*Take heed to yourſelves, leſt any man deceive you, is one* '*of the important directions of our divine Maſter, which would* '*have been to no purpoſe, if it was impoſſible to keep ourſelves* '*from being deceived.*' Here, it is very plainly aſſerted, that divine directions are to no purpoſe, if we are altogether unable to comply with them. It is the divine direction, *To love the Lord our God with all our heart; to walk before him and be perfect; to be holy as he is holy.* But all theſe, according to our Author's aſſertion, are to no purpoſe; if we are quite un-

* Ezek. xxxvi. 26. † Acts ii. 39. ‡ Matth. xxiv. 24.

able to comply with them; and what could Adam in innocence do more? Nay, what more was required of him, than to obſerve divine directions? It is impoſſible for us, in our lapſed ſtate, to obey any divine direction, in our own ſtrength, in an acceptable manner; yet are not divine directions to no purpoſe: They ſhew us our duty; may be the mean, in the hand of God, to convince us of our inability, and our indiſpenſible need of the Redeemer's ſtrength. To maintain, that, by our taking heed to ourſelves, we can obey every divine direction, is the very ſoul of legality, with very little diſguiſe. Some have expreſſed the ſame ſentiment rather more plainly, by affirming, that it is *abſurd* to think, that God would require any thing of us, as our duty, which we have not ſtrength to perform. It is certainly our indiſpenſible duty to make conſcience of complying with every divine direction; but even to *attempt* this in our own ſtrength, is to deny natural depravity and inability, to deſpiſe the Redeemer's fulneſs of grace; and, as here, to ſet the power of fallen man on a level, with that of Adam in innocence.

Mr. Neil, like the Baxterians, ſeldom conſiders faith and repentance as the purchaſe of Chriſt, and as bleſſings freely promiſed in the new covenant, and a principal branch of ſalvation in this life; but as duties to be performed by us, and almoſt every bleſſing ſuſpended on our repenting and believing. Faith and repentance are certainly duties required; but if ever we expect to exerciſe them in a goſpel manner, we muſt view them as bleſſings freely promiſed. And to conſider them generally, as duties to be performed by us; and almoſt every bleſſing granted, on the footing of our repenting and believing, is, at leaſt, very *like* the Neonomian ſcheme.

Page 133, 134. '*That he is ready to ſhew mercy, and par-*
'*don to every guilty offender,* UPON *their repentance and faith*
'*in the great Redeemer, is one obvious reaſon, why the goſpel*
'*of his grace is ſtiled,*' "*Glad tidings of great joy.*"

I apprehend, that the goſpel declaring, that God is ready to ſhew mercy, and to pardon guilty offenders, on the footing of the Surety's all-perfect righteouſneſs; and, that he promiſes both faith and repentance freely, on account of what the Saviour has done, is a much more obvious reaſon, why the goſ-

pel is ſtiled, *Glad tidings*. The reaſon aſſigned by the heavenly hoſt, who attended the divine Redeemer's appearing in our world, and which Mr. Neil alludes unto, is certainly juſt, *For unto you is born—a Saviour*. This includes ſalvation from ſin and wrath, faith, repentance, and every other bleſſing. If God is ready to ſhew mercy *only* on OUR repenting and believing; the goſpel may well be ſtiled, *Sorrowful tidings*. According to this aſſertion, faith and repentance do not ſpring from mercy, they are not fruits of mercy, they muſt precede even God's being ready to ſhew mercy; and, conſequently, the ſinner muſt work them out in his own ſtrength, which will not be a very *joyful* meſſage to him, if he underſtand his own inability. But a ſinner, exerciſing faith and repentance, is not only an evidence, that God is ready to *ſhew* mercy to him; but alſo, that he has already *exerciſed* mercy towards him. If God does not ſhew mercy, where are ſinners to find faith and repentance? Here we have divine mercy and pardon ſuſpended, on the footing of a faith and repentance wrought out, *before* God is ready to ſhew mercy; and conſequently in the ſinner's *own* ſtrength. One would think this is conſiderably plain.

Page 226, '*Our offended Sovereign is ready to be reconciled* '*unto all*, UPON *their exerciſing repentance towards God, and* '*faith in our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.*' The ſcripture, however, repreſents a gracious God, as already reconciled, on account of what the Saviour has done. *The Lord is well-pleaſed, for his righteouſneſs ſake* *. *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleaſed* †. Faith, indeed, is the mean of divine appointment, for intereſting us in God as reconciled, and is the hand of the ſoul to receive all the ſubſequent communications of grace; and repentance is inſeparably connected with faith. But, if God is *only ready to be reconciled*, UPON our repentance and faith, then the Redeemer's blood of itſelf was not *ſufficient* to reconcile the offended Majeſty of heaven, but it ſeems our repentance and faith muſt be joined with it, in order to accompliſh this end; which is to make an idol of our faith and repentance, to make them partners with Chriſt, in the glory of reconciling work. But, ſurely, to pacify offended Deity, is

* Iſa. xlii. 21. † Matth. iii. 17.

a branch of that honour, which a Saviour will not give to another; and of that praiſe, which he will not give to graven images.—And, farther, if God's being reconciled unto ſinners, is ſuſpended on the footing of their faith and repentance; then certainly faith and repentance cannot be the gift of God; for, according to our Author, he is not reconciled, till we receive them. There is a very material difference between our being called to believe, as the appointed mean of intereſting us in God as reconciled; and being called to believe and repent, as that on the footing of which he is only *ready* to be reconciled. Faith and repentance are the *fruits*, and not the *procuring* cauſes of reconciliation.

In the ſame page, we are told, that '*upon laying aſide our 'enmity, he is ready to be reconciled.*' LAYING ASIDE OUR ENMITY then, is a thing which muſt be done in *our* own ſtrength; ſince God is only *ready* to be reconciled when this is done. This certainly gives a very ſuperficial view of the natural enmity of the depraved heart. What miſerable comforters would we be to an awakened ſinner, who has got any ſuitable views of his natural enmity, to tell him, that God is *ready* to be reconciled, upon his laying aſide his enmity! The holy Spirit of God, by his divine influences, is the efficient cauſe; and faith's views of God as reconciled, by the death of his own Son, the appointed mean of ſubduing the natural enmity of the heart.

In page 232, it is aſſerted, that Chriſt died, '*That he might 'open a way for the free exerciſe of his mercy, and that his 'throne of grace might be acceſſible to all* PENITENT *offenders.*' If the throne of grace is not acceſſible to all, where are impenitent ſinners to apply? Where are they to expect penitence, but at a throne of grace? But, according to this account, it is not acceſſible to them, till they are penitent; and, therefore, this penitence, which renders the throne of grace acceſſible, muſt be wrought out by themſelves. Beſides, the free exerciſe of mercy, mentioned in the preceding clauſe, and the throne of grace acceſſible, on the footing of our penitence, will certainly appear a paradox to theſe who underſtand the freedom of grace. Here, acceſs to the throne of grace is ſuſpended, on our penitence; and, therefore, this penitence muſt be wrought out, before we have acceſs to a throne of grace.

In page 235, it is ſaid, If ſinners had the leaſt reaſon to think, that they have to do '*with an implacable Sovereign, whoſe pity* '*and favour is not to be gained, by the moſt penitent ſubmiſſion.*' Here, it is evidently implied, that our penitent ſubmiſſion, gains the *favour* of God: But, inſtead of this, it is a *fruit* of God's favour. What can be aſcribed more to the Redeemer's righteouſneſs, than gaining the favour of God? Here it is ſuſpended, on our penitence; and, therefore, on a penitence which is no fruit of his favour. It is true, he mentions immediately after, God's giving the life of his own Son, for the ſalvation of a guilty world; but, how are theſe things conſiſtent?

Here then we have divine mercy,—pardon,—divine reconciliation,—acceſs to a throne of grace,—and the favour of God,—all ſuſpended upon our *repenting*, *believing*, and *obeying*. If this is the goſpel which is preached in the church of Relief, the reader may judge of its *purity*. Mr. H——n alledges, that we ſhould inſiſt more on *duties*; but if he means, that we ſhould inſiſt on them in *this* manner, he muſt have us excuſed.

In page 318, we have *repentance* of purpoſe, ſet before *faith*; and that ſcripture quoted, *Repent, and believe the goſpel.* The Author might have known very well, that the word in this text, rendered *repent*, ſignifies a change of ſentiment, or opinion. In the ſame page, we have *repentance* before *pardon*; and Acts v. 31. quoted as a proof of it, *To give repentance to Iſrael, and forgiveneſs of ſins.* And, that we may not miſtake his meaning, he tells us, '*Repentance in the* FIRST '*place, and* THEN *remiſſion of ſins.*' This would ſeem to indicate, that the Author knew there was ſome controverſy about this point of doctrine. But, unleſs it can be evinced, that *forgiveneſs*, in this text, does not reſpect pardon, or remiſſion, applied to the conſcience, it does not affect the doctrine he oppoſes. I may likewiſe notice, as before, that the word ſignifies only a change of ſentiment, or opinion; Iſrael, or the Jews, changing their prejudiced notions, concerning the Meſſiah. In a word, if by repentance is meant, the *implantation*, or *being* of the grace of repentance; then *faith*, *repentance*, and *pardon* are at once. Pardon is granted, and all the graces of the Spirit implanted, at the ſame inſtant; and,

perhaps, no great propriety, in ſaying, *firſt* this, and *then* that. But if he means, the *exerciſe* of repentance, as he ſeems to do; then, if it is before faith, it is not of faith, it is ſin, and cannot pleaſe God. If it is before faith, it muſt likewiſe be exerciſed in the ſinner's *own ſtrength*; for faith is the hand of the ſoul, which receives the *promiſed ſtrength*. And, ſurely, our own natural powers are not ſo impaired, and perverted, as Calviniſts maintain; if we can exerciſe genuine repentance in our own ſtrength, which muſt be the caſe, if it is before faith. The exerciſe of repentance is a fruit of faith; *They ſhall look upon me, whom they have pierced; and they ſhall mourn* [a].' It is a fruit of pardon; *And never open thy mouth any more, becauſe of thy ſhame, when I am pacified toward thee for all that thou haſt done* [b]. Faith's views of pardoning mercy, melt the heart into the exerciſe of goſpel repentance.—Having now conſidered his doctrine of repentance and faith; I may obſerve ſome other particulars.

Page 147, '*This is the foundation of a ſpiritual life, to re-* '*nounce the fleſh*, &c.' Here it is expreſly aſſerted, that it is ſomething *done* by ourſelves, which is the foundation of a ſpiritual life; and if we can lay the foundation, why not raiſe the ſuperſtructure alſo? But the foundation of a ſpiritual life, muſt be laid by another hand. I apprehend, that the Redeemer, by his Spirit, uniting the ſinner unto his own glorious perſon, is the foundation of a ſpiritual life; *If a man abide not* IN ME, *he is caſt forth as a branch, and is withered* [c]. As it was ſaid of the material temple, ſo may it be ſaid of the ſpiritual building, *The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this houſe, his hands alſo ſhall finiſh it* [d].

Page 162. '*Holineſs is—the foundation of all inward peace* '*and comfort.*' The word of God, however, directs us to ſomething elſe as the foundation of our peace; *This* MAN *ſhall be the peace* [e];—*He is our peace* [f];—*Having made peace through the blood of his croſs* [g]: what peace, or comfort, would all our imperfect holineſs afford without this? It would afford but very little comfort to the dejected Chriſtian, who may be ready to conclude, that he is a ſtranger unto holineſs, to tell him, Holineſs is the foundation of thy peace. He would ſoon

a Zech. xii. 10. *b* Ezek. xvi 6. *c* John xv. 6. *d* Zech. iv. 9.
e Micah v. 5, 6. *f* Eph. ii. 14. *g* Col. i. 20.

reply, Alas! my holineſs is all as filthy rags in my own eyes; and what muſt it be in the eye of omniſcience, of infinite holineſs? If I have no other foundation but this, I may bid peace and comfort for ever adieu. But direct his faith to Chriſt, in the faithful promiſe, you then preſent unto him a *ſure* foundation, for ſaying, like the Pſalmiſt, *Return unto thy reſt, O my ſoul.* And, certainly, it could never afford any comfort to the awakened, but unconverted ſinner, with Sinai's flames flaſhing in his conſcience, to put inherent holineſs in the place of the Redeemer's righteouſneſs.

Page 234. '*If ſinners had the leaſt reaſon to think, that* '*they have to do with an inexorable enemy, whom no intreaties* '*could move.*' Here the deſign of the duty of *prayer* is miſrepreſented, as if a God of infinite perfection, could be moved, or influenced to this or that, which he is otherwiſe averſe unto, by the piteous intreaties of wretched ſinners; in the ſame manner, that their fellow-creatures may be affected by their bitter complaints. If there is any thing like this in ſcripture, it is ſpoken of God, after the manner of men, as when he is ſaid to *repent*, &c. And, as a notion of this ſort, is perhaps too common among goſpel-hearers, I may notice, that one great end of the duty of prayer is, to glorify God, by acknowledging our entire dependence on him. Another, by the bleſſing accompanying it, to be the mean of waining our depraved hearts from that evil, and to diſpoſe and incline them to that good, which they are naturally averſe from. But, it was no part of the deſign of it, to affect, or influence a God of infinite perfection, to that which he is averſe from; for, *Known unto him are all his ways from the beginning.* And, therefore, goſpel-hearer, when you are about to apply to the duty of prayer, think not with yourſelf, I am about to apply to a duty, intended to move and affect a God of infinite perfection, as if he were a man, as I am: But rather think thus, I am about to apply to a mean, which heaven has appointed, by the bleſſing accompanying it, to affect and move this depraved heart of mine to love a Saviour more, to hate ſin more, and to preſs after conformity to my Redeemer.

There are a great number of other exceptionable expreſſions in theſe ſermons: But, I muſt not enlarge; ſuch as,

Page 226, '*Our Lord is willing to ſave all, who are willing*

'to be *ſaved, in that way he propoſes in the goſpel.*' It is a principal branch of his ſaving work, to make ſinners *willing*, and contained in the promiſe, *Thy people ſhall be willing, in the day of thy power* *.

Page 371, '*He hath given himſelf—to all who believe and* 'obey him.' But the declaration, *I am the Lord thy God*, was directed to the Iſraelites, without exception; and, in like manner, to every hearer of the goſpel.

Page 384, 385. '*We can have no juſt hopes of our intereſt* 'in the future glory and felicity, without faith in the Son of 'God.—*It is true and lively faith in him, that (according to* 'the divine conſtitution) intitles us to it.' The laſt of theſe aſſertions, evidently puts our *faith* in the *room* of the *righteouſneſs* which it receives. That conſtitution can never be divine, which ſets aſide the Redeemer's righteouſneſs, and ſubſtitutes our faith in its room. *Faith is the evidence of things not ſeen* †; but not our title to them.

Now, theſe doctrinal articles, and a variety of others, which might be mentioned in the ſermons under conſideration, may juſtly enough be viewed, as Mr. H——n's. It cannot be ſuppoſed, that he never peruſed theſe ſermons. He certainly knows, that they are common among theſe in connection with him. He commends the Author, without the leaſt exception to any of his doctrines, or caution unto the reader. Telling us, he not only filled, but *adorned* his ſtation in the church. In what other light can the reader view this, than Mr. H——n's approbation of the doctrines contained in theſe ſermons? And how he can diſclaim them, he beſt knows. Nay, if it is fact, as ſome have aſſerted, (who would not probably have done it, without ſome meaſure of certainty), that theſe ſermons were not only publiſhed under the eye of one Relief miniſter, but particular ſermons, ſent to particular miniſters, to prepare for the preſs, they may juſtly be conſidered, not only as the doctrines once preached by an individual, but as the doctrines of the Relief church ſtill; doctrines which her miniſters approve of, and recommend to theſe under their inſpection. And, if this is to preach the goſpel in its purity, let every Calviniſt judge.

Perhaps, ſome will think it arrogant, to ſtate any quarrel

* Pſalm cx. 3. † Heb. xi. 1.

with Mr. Bain's diſcourſes; but we are to call no man on earth maſter: and though his ſermons are not as exceptionable, as theſe we have been conſidering, there are ſeveral particulars which we cannot approve of; and I ſhall not enlarge.

Page 4, we are told, that the myſtery of ſalvation is unvailed under the goſpel, that '*ſuch as feel their need, may take* '*the benefit of it.*' They certainly may; but may not *all*, without exception, take the benefit of it? The word of God, does not confine it to theſe who *feel* their need. *To you, O men, I call. Hearken to me, ye ſtout-hearted, and far from righteouſneſs. Whoſoever will, let him come.*

Page 35, in explaining that text, *So might grace reign through righteouſneſs unto eternal life, by Jeſus Chriſt our Lord:* after it is juſtly obſerved, that grace reigns through the Surety's righteouſneſs imputed; it is added, '*Grace reigns through a* '*righteouſneſs implanted in us.*' Charity obliges us to conclude, that the deſign of this is good, to guard the goſpel againſt the charge of licentiouſneſs: But, ſurely it is practicable to do this, without injuring the grace of the goſpel. The phraſe, THROUGH RIGHTEOUSNESS, is expreſſive of the *cauſe* of the reign of grace, as the conſtruction of the original words evidently imports; and reſpects the Redeemer's all-perfect righteouſneſs, as the procuring cauſe of grace's reign. In this ſenſe, the expreſſion is frequently uſed. *For the promiſe was through the righteouſneſs of faith* *. *Obtained like precious faith, through the righteouſneſs of God, and our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt* †. If in theſe, and other texts, *through righteouſneſs*, evidently reſpects the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, as the procuring cauſe of every bleſſing: If grace then reign through a righteouſneſs *implanted* in us, our inherent holineſs muſt be connected with the Redeemer's all-perfect righteouſneſs, as the cauſe of the reign of grace. But the perfection of that righteouſneſs, excludes all inherent holineſs in the creature, from being a partner with it. Beſides, if the apoſtle knew how to expreſs himſelf, grace reigns through imputed righteouſneſs, as the *cauſe*; but it reigns not *through*, but *unto* implanted righteouſneſs, as the *effect*; implanted righteouſneſs being included in that eternal life, UNTO which grace reigns. If grace then reigns through righteouſneſs im-

* Rom. iv. 13. † 2 Peter i. 1.

planted, our inherent holineſs muſt be a *cauſe*, and not the *effect* of grace reigning through the Surety's righteouſneſs.

In page 38, it is ſaid, that it belongs unto Chriſt as the Head of the church, '*To priſcribe the terms of ſalvation.*' Although *goſpel terms*, and *terms of ſalvation*, may be very common expreſſions, with miniſters of a certain denomination; yet they are very apt to miſlead many goſpel-hearers. It belonged unto God, eſſentially conſidered, in the perſon of the Father, ſuſtaining the character of the offended Judge, to preſcribe the *terms* of the elect's ſalvation, unto Chriſt as Mediator in the council of peace from eternity. And theſe TERMS were nothing leſs, than his fulfilling all that righteouſneſs, which the broken covenant could demand of the ſinner. It belongs unto Chriſt, as the Head of the church, to appoint the means whereby ſalvation is to be communicated; as the great Prophet, to reveal the manner of conveying and receiving; yea, to beſtow the bleſſings of ſalvation, as the Adminiſtrator of the covenant: but the terms of ſalvation were preſcribed unto him; and if they were not completely fulfilled by him, but part of them left to be fulfilled by us, his righteouſneſs muſt be imperfect, and we may bid ſalvation an eternal adieu. He has purchaſed complete ſalvation; all the bleſſings of it are lodged in his hand; he offers them freely, he confers faith and every grace freely: But if his giving grace freely, and enabling ſinners to receive freely, are terms of ſalvation, language has very little propriety. Terms of ſalvation on our part, naturally ſuggeſt unto goſpel-hearers ſomething to be done by themſelves, to procure a title to it; and this leads them aſide from the perfection of the Surety's righteouſneſs, as their only legal plea. In the ſame page, we have Mr. Neil's doctrine of '*Remiſſion to the Penitent.*' Whereas it is the *faith* of remiſſion, which draws forth repentance into ſuitable exerciſe.

Page 50. '*This life is in Chriſt Jeſus our Immanuel, and* '*Head of the church.*' "*It pleaſed the Father, that in him* "*all fulneſs ſhould dwell; that of the Godhead bodily, and a* "*fulneſs of grace and truth, as Mediator.*" The fulneſs of the Godhead dwelling *bodily*, or *perſonally*, in Chriſt, is natural and neceſſary, and depends upon the pleaſure of none. His

Mediatory fulneſs is given him by God, in the perſon of the Father. Accordingly, when the apoſtle mentions his Mediatory fulneſs, Col. i. 19. he ſpeaks of it as a *fruit* of the Father's pleaſure; but, he mentions no ſuch thing, when he ſpeaks of the fulneſs of the Godhead dwelling in him bodily, Col. ii. 9. But here the fulneſs of the Godhead dwelling in him, is repreſented as a fruit of the Father's pleaſure, and conſequently his ſupreme Deity, neceſſary ſelf-exiſtence, and independence, are overthrown; for, the fulneſs of the Godhead dwelling in him, is a fruit of the Father's pleaſure. And, through the whole of this particular, there is no diſtinction made, concerning the *manner* in which the fulneſs of the Godhead dwells in him; and the *manner* in which his Mediatory fulneſs dwells in him. This is certainly an undeſigned overſight, or miſtake; but a very material one, eſpecially as the ſupreme Deity of the Son of God has been queſtioned. We might ſurely have expected, that a witneſs in the trial of P. Simſon, would have been clear and explicit, in the illuſtration of ſuch an important article of the Chriſtian ſyſtem. But paſſing this;

In page 87, it is aſſerted, that, '*The tribunal of juſtice is become a mercy-ſeat, where the condemned, but returning penitent, may ſue for pardon.*' Here, as we had occaſion to obſerve, on another performance, the *right* to ſue for pardon is ſuſpended on *returning penitency*. But, certainly every ſinner may ſue for pardon. If only the returning penitent may ſue for pardon at a mercy-ſeat, where is the *impenitent* ſinner to ſue for returning *penitency?* Is he to accompliſh this himſelf? If he cannot, he muſt ſue for it ſome where; and if not at a mercy-ſeat, where muſt he go? At a mercy-ſeat, the ſinner is as well warranted, and it is as much his duty to ſue for *returning penitency*, as for *pardon*. And how the right to ſue for pardon, confined to the returning penitent, can be reconciled with the freedom of the goſpel-call, I leave others to conſider.

Page 104. '*It is foretold, that, in the goſpel days, the people of God,* SHALL FEAR THE LORD, AND HIS GOODNESS; '*but not ſo, as to be unimpreſſed with his juſtice, or fearleſs of the puniſhment which ſin deſerves.*' Here, there is the utmoſt ambiguity. Is it vindictive juſtice, the godly are to fear? Is it the puniſhment of ſin, contained in the curſe of

the broken law? Are the godly to indulge fear, that this puniſhment will be inflicted on themſelves? If ſo, I am certain unbelief muſt be their duty. A gracious God has aſſured them, in his word, that he has inflicted all the puniſhment due to ſin, on his own Son, as their Surety; he has ſworn, *That he will never be wroth with them, nor rebuke them,* in a vindictive manner: After all this, to indulge fear, that this puniſhment ſhall be inflicted upon them, is to give the God of truth the lie to his face, in his word, his promiſe, and his oath; and if this is not unbelief, I demand information, what it is? It is true, the godly ought to be impreſſed with God's juſtice, as well as any other perfection; they may be filled with holy awe, at the thoughts of his dreadful judgments on ungodly men, which is evidently intended, in Pſal. cxix. 120. quoted, by our Author: They may likewiſe be filled with holy awe of God's fatherly chaſtiſements, and all this their duty. Yea, while they are here, they never get entirely free of unbelieving fear at times, as every grace is imperfect: but this is not their duty, but their weakneſs and infirmity; *I ſaid, this is mine infirmity.* And this can never be included in the prediction or promiſe, mentioned by our Author; for it is holy reverence of the Lord, and his goodneſs. Mr. H——n has contemned one article of the marrow doctrine; this is, perhaps, a thruſt, in the dark, at another: But, they may be plain; and, I hope, this doctrine will ſtill have ſome to defend it.

Page 132. '*But the purpoſe which cleaves to the Lord, is* '*proof againſt ſeduction, or total departure.*' It is certainly right, to maintain the perſeverance of the ſaints: But too much, by far, is here aſcribed to the purpoſe of the creature. It is God's purpoſe;—Chriſt's purchaſe;—the Spirit's inhabitation;—God's promiſe;—Chriſt's interceſſion, *&c.*; and no purpoſe of their's, which is ſufficient to preſerve them from ſeduction.

In page 244, we have our Author inveighing, with conſiderable acrimony, againſt oaths, and teſtimonies, which Chriſt has not enjoined. And all ſuch, as are not agreeable to and founded upon the word of God, ought certainly to be rejected. But oaths and teſtimonies may be as agreeable to the word of God, as confeſſions; and the Relief have not yet, openly

rejected confeſſions. In this ſermon, we have the divine inſtitution of Preſbyterian church-government and diſcipline aſſerted; and, a variety of its ſalutary effects enumerated.

'*It is well adapted to impreſs a ſenſe of ſin and its danger;* '*to awaken that grief and godly ſorrow, which tend to the* '*mortifying of ſin,—reclaiming the offender,—an antidote* '*againſt the poiſon and infectious air of bad example.*' We have alſo the mournful effects of its diſcontinuance mentioned. '*Vice rides in triumph, and pure and undefiled religion declines* '*apace.*' In the laſt page of the ſermon, however, the Author pleads warmly for communion with viſible ſaints. None will deny, but there may be many ſuch among Epiſcopalians and Independents, who not only diſapprove of, but vigorouſly oppoſe this government and diſcipline. And, they muſt be ſtrangers to the Relief, who know not, that theſe, in particular, are among the viſible ſaints, with whom they plead for communion; and, therefore, muſt be among our Author's viſible ſaints alſo.

Now, it is verily a curioſity to ſome, to ſee it aſſerted, page 244, That Preſbyterial church-government and diſcipline, exerciſed in the church, is '*one of the capital means given for* '*her edification.*' The conſequence of neglecting it, '*Vice* '*rides in triumph, pure and undefiled religion declines apace.*' But, in the very next page, this CAPITAL MEAN of divine inſtitution, with all its ſalutary effects, and mournful conſequences of its diſcontinuance, are all juſt a mere *circumſtantial, unimportant* matter; *uneſſential*, and if this is refuſed, there can be no ſuch thing as communion of ſaints on earth. It is plain, our Author is pleading for Relief terms of communion with Epiſcopalians and Independents, who oppoſe this mean of divine inſtitution; and the difference between him and them, is only *circumſtantial, unimportant, uneſſential.* I appeal to any unprejudiced perſon, if the conſequence is not clear as ſunſhine, in theſe two pages. Our Author, by his juſt encomiums, on Preſbyterian church-government and diſcipline, has forged a dagger to give a deadly wound to his own terms of communion; how it is to be healed, I know not. A CAPITAL MEAN of divine inſtitution, for the church's edification; but *circumſtantial, unimportant, uneſſential;* and if maintained,

in any other view, no ſuch thing as communion of ſaints on earth, is a diſcovery peculiar to this enlightened age.

It is added, in the ſame 245 page, '*Nor can faction, or party ſpirit, give a good reaſon, why imperfection in knowledge ſhould impede this communion, when deficiency, in point of holineſs, has not the ſame effect.*' This is, perhaps, an invidious reflection on Seceders; if ſo, the aſſertion itſelf, is no ſmall indication of faction and party ſpirit. I have already obſerved, that party ſpirit is carried a greater length in the Relief, than among any of the different denominations of profeſſors. They carry their party ſpirit ſo far, as to exclude all, who diſapprove of their antiſcriptural terms of communion, from any intereſt in the blood of Chriſt. And after all their outcry againſt party ſpirit, the world can now judge, if as much party ſpirit appears in any publications, as thoſe of that party.

I have no concern, whether faction and party ſpirit can anſwer our Author's argument, or not; but, I am certain, there is nothing unanſwerable in it. We readily own, that every defect in knowledge, ought not to exclude perſons from the ſeals of the covenant. But, what he pleads for is very different, namely, ignorance, allowed and approven of, maintained to be juſt and ſcriptural. Defects in holineſs of this ſort, ought certainly to exclude from ſealing ordinances; and, according to our Author's rule, defects in knowledge of this ſort, ought to have the ſame effect. Suppoſe a man applies to Mr. Baine, for admiſſion to the communion-table, and tells him very honeſtly, I am extremely deficient, in a variety of particulars, which you reckon degrees of holineſs; but I allow, I approve of theſe defects in holineſs; I maintain them to be juſt and ſcriptural, and am reſolved to perſevere in them, and oppoſe as much as in me lies, theſe degrees of holineſs, you talk of, becauſe they have no foundation in the word of God. I am perſuaded, he would ſcarcely admit ſuch a one.

Well, ſuppoſe an Epiſcopalian next applies for admiſſion, and tells Mr. Baine, You reckon me ignorant of ſome of your *capital means* of divine inſtitution; but, I allow of what you call ignorance, I approve of it, I maintain it to be juſt and ſcriptural; I maintain abjured ſupremacy, and that your capital mean of divine inſtitution has no foundation in the word of God, and am reſolved to perſevere in oppoſing it. Now, if

defects in holineſs of this ſort, would be a juſt impediment in the way of admiſſion, faction and party ſpirit can aſſign no good reaſon, why ſuch defects in knowledge ſhould not have the ſame effect. Admitting of his own rule about imperfection in knowledge, and defects in holineſs; it is clear and pointed againſt Relief terms of communion.

In page 280, it is aſſerted, that Chriſt's teſtament was made, '*In behalf of theſe who were given him out of the world.*' This confounds the making of Chriſt's teſtament, with the making of the covenant of grace. In the making of the covenant of grace, Chriſt acted as the Surety of it; and it was made in behalf of theſe, who were given him out of the world. But, in making his teſtament, He acted as the Adminiſtrator of the covenant; and his teſtament is as extenſive as his adminiſtration, which extends to all who hear the goſpel. And Mr. Baine maintains very juſtly in the ſame ſermon, that all who hear the goſpel, are importuned to receive theſe legacies; which implies, that this teſtament is in their behalf. But for this, I refer the reader to the judicious Boſton's treatiſe, on the Covenant of Grace, where he will find more ſolid inſtruction, concerning the covenant of grace, Chriſt's teſtament, *&c.* than in many modern publications.

In the ſame page, it is ſaid, That the elect '*qualified for* '*the bleſſings promiſed there, they are believers in Chriſt, his* '*willing and holy people.*' But, is not faith, or *believing*, a promiſed bleſſing? According to this, the elect are to believe, to *qualify* themſelves for believing.

In page 267, it is ſaid of the death of Chriſt, '*The ſame* '*death, that renders the Deity placable.*' PLACABLE, only imports, that he may be appeaſed; but the ſcripture aſſures us, *The Lord is well-pleaſed for his righteouſneſs ſake.* The Deity placable, and ſinners in a ſalvable condition, are equally favourite expreſſions of theſe who maintain principles directly oppoſite to Calviniſm.

It will be ſaid, that in both Mr. Neil's, and Mr. Baine's ſermons, we may find doctrines directly oppoſite to *ſome* of the particulars I have mentioned. This may be true, but which ſhall we conſider as the Author's ſentiments? Or muſt we conclude, that their principles include both? It was an obſervation of one, that Calviniſts, and Socinians, have a con-

ſiſtent ſcheme, (however oppoſite the latter is to the word of God); but that the principles of a number between theſe two, are made up of inconſiſtencies. And, if the reader join this Section with the former, he may judge, what reaſon Mr. H——n has for boaſting, in an inſulting manner, concerning the purity of doctrine in the Relief. And if this is connected, with what the reader may find in the *Relief ſcheme conſidered*, concerning the manner in which a number of the Relief miniſters left the eſtabliſhment, not moving one foot till another was fixed, proprietors, and contributors only, allowed to vote for a miniſter, and other particulars there mentioned at large; if this is a ſcheme which muſt infallibly ruin the Seceſſion, as Mr. H——n confidently aſſerts, it is a plain evidence, that the generation are quite tired of the goſpel in its purity, and the ſcriptural government of the houſe of God.

SECT. IV.

Containing Animadverſions on the Points in which the Synod of Relief differ from the Eſtabliſhment.

OUR Author, having finiſhed his religious ſyſtem, proceeds to give us an account of the points in which the ſynod of Relief differ from the Eſtabliſhed Church. His account of this matter is hurried over, conſiſting only of two particulars, very briefly illuſtrated; perhaps, in order to gain time, for unfolding at large, the errors of Seceders, as being much more difficult to detect, and more pernicious to the generation. However, *legal doctrines*, and *intruſions*, are the preciſe points of difference between the ſynod of Relief, and the eſtabliſhed Church. I have little occaſion to enlarge on this, as Mr. H——n is ſo conciſe.

I may obſerve in the general, that even theſe two particulars, weighty as they certainly are, cannot warrant ſeparation, till every ſcriptural, habile method for reclaiming the Eſtabliſhed

Church from ſuch legal doctrines, and irregularities is attempted: Such as, petitions, remonſtrances, proteſtations, *&c.* It is not *merely* legal doctrines and intruſions, but theſe perſiſted in, refuſing to reform, and every ſcriptural method of reclaiming attempted, without ſucceſs, which can warrant a ſeparation. Unleſs Mr. H——n can ſhew, that the Relief church has taken every ſcriptural method in pleading with her mother, to reform theſe abuſes (which ſome apprehend will be a very difficult taſk) her ſeparation is unwarranted; and he may conſider, how he will free her from the odious charge of *ſchiſm.* I am certain, it will be a very unſatisfactory reaſon to many, to aſſert, as he does, in his animadverſions on the Seceder's Teſtimony, that miniſters may, at their own hand, deſert their charges, diſſolve their connections with eccleſiaſtic courts, to whom they have vowed ſubjection in the Lord, without giving them any reaſon why, or in the leaſt, acknowledging them. This, certainly, looks very like making the houſe of God, a houſe not of *order*, but of *confuſion.*

I may likewiſe obſerve, that I cannot go all his lengths in reprobating, I mean, ſtriking off from the liſt of viſible ſaints, every one who may juſtly enough be ſtiled, a *legal preacher*, or who may have accepted a charge, without a *regular goſpel call.* That the reader may not conſider this as an unſupported charge, he will find that Mr. H——n, in a ſubſequent part of his performance, maintains, that the Relief church, holds communion with viſible ſaints, or all whom they can judge, in charity, are acquainted with real godlineſs. But, they will not hold communion with legal preachers, or intruders; and conſequently exclude all ſuch, from the number of viſible ſaints. Calviniſts have generally reckoned Baxterians, Neonomians, and Arminians, among the number of legal preachers: And, as generally allowed, that ſome of them, might have better hearts than heads. It will be ſaid, they are only ſtruck off from the liſt of *viſible* ſaints; but, perhaps, theſe who are intimatly acquainted with ſome of them, may ſee very ſtrong evidences of real undiſſembled piety. Baxter himſelf is ſaid to have been eminently pious; and Mr. H——n beſtows very liberal encomiums on him.

But, perhaps, our difference here may be this, when we conſider the two preceding Sections, we are at a loſs to know

what it is, which is reckoned legal preaching, by the church of Relief. It is not improbable, that they do not claſs Baxterians, Neonomians, and Arminians, among the number of legal preachers. Mr. H——n has given us an account of what he, as an individual, ſtiles their religious ſyſtem; and, on ſome points, conſiderably exceptionable: But, it is evident, that doctrines are preached among them, inconſiſtent enough with his religious ſyſtem; ſo that we are yet at a loſs to know what the Relief church means, by legal preaching. And with reſpect to intruſion, as Mr. Ramſay has very juſtly obſerved, what good reaſon can be aſſigned, why it ſhould ſtrike off a man from the liſt of viſible ſaints in Scotland, while it has no ſuch effect in England? Unleſs it is this, that in the one, it is very unpopular, in the other it is little regarded, which theſe who build their terms of church communion on the humour of the populace, muſt attend unto with ſpecial care. To declare, that it is unwarrantable to hold communion with ſuch; it is well known, this is what we heartily approve of: But ſuch a coarſe way of going to work, cutting them off, without exception, from the liſt of viſible ſaints, is exceedingly harſh and ſevere. I am certain, that even an uncharitable Seceder ſhrinks at the thoughts of it. It is one thing to refuſe full communion, leſt we be partakers in other men's defections; but a very different thing to ſtrike them all out of the number of viſible ſaints.

Our Author aſſerts, Part III. page 45. '*There are two unhappy extremes in communion, in the day in which we live. The firſt conſiſts in a promiſcuous admiſſion of all profeſſors, without ever enquiring into their knowledge, or character. This plan of communion, admits of perſons deſtitute of every* VISIBLE EVIDENCE *of Chriſtianity.*' Now, he certainly does not mean, that this is the caſe among diſſenters; for he immediately charges them with the oppoſite extreme. He therefore, muſt mean, that this plan is adapted in the eſtabliſhed church: How ſtrange! A plan of communion adopted in the church, admitting to ſealing ordinances, perſons deſtitute of every *viſible evidence* of Chriſtianity; we will admit only viſible ſaints, but we have no difference with her on this account; intruſions and legal doctrines are the only points of difference. But, promiſ-

cuous admiſſion, is a ſin which God in righteous judgment may, yea, will write bitter things againſt; and ought certainly to be a ground of our difference with every Society chargeable therewith.

He likewiſe obſerves, page 49, That there are ſome '*who* '*receive a ſum of money from wealthy and proud offenders,* '*inſtead of making them undergo the appointed diſcipline of the* '*ſanctuary. Is not this plainly to barter an ordinance of Chriſt* '*for the world, and to make his Father's houſe, an houſe of* '*merchandiſe?*' He cannot have Seceders in his eye, as they are not at all chargeable with what he here very juſtly reprehends. No; they are convinced, that church and ſtate are ſo diſtinct, that when ſeſſions exact mulcts of this ſort, as I know ſome frequently do, they ought to conſtitute, not in the name of the head of the church, but of the head of the ſtate; not in the name of Zion's, but of Britain's king. And, did they reflect but a little, they might eaſily ſee, that if they are not acting like as many Popiſh friars, expoſing repentance and pardon to ſale, they are at leaſt acting like as many country juſtices of the peace, and not like office-bearers in the houſe of God, who have to do with men's conſciences only, and not with their purſe. It is ſtrange, that men of judgment and ſobriety do not conſider, that this is to proſtitute the ſpirituality of the diſcipline of the houſe of God, for ſome frivolous pretence or other. But, Mr. H——n has no difference with them, on this account, it is only legal doctrines and intruſions. How hard a matter is it, to render the legs of the lame equal!

According to our Author's account of this matter, to join with legaliſts and intruders is ſuch a heinous ſin, as renders ſeparation neceſſary; yea, an unqueſtionable duty: But, he bewails the deſpotiſm of the times, excluding him from communion with godly miniſters in the church; who continue in the moſt intimate connexions with legaliſts and intruders. And, if the deſpotiſm of the times, would allow ſome of the godly miniſters, who take an intruder in one hand, to take Mr. H——n in the other, for ought he has yet ſaid, he has no objection to walk on in company. Although he had not ſtated this as a ground of ſeparation, he might at leaſt, if he wiſhed to be faithful, have expreſſed his diſapprobation of the

godly miniſters in the eſtabliſhed church; their continuing in full connection with legaliſts and intruders: But, not the remoteſt hint of this ſort. It is true, it is not very popular; but, who can tell from any thing he has advanced, on this branch of his ſubject, why he is not a reſpectable miniſter in the eſtabliſhment, rather than in the Relief? Unleſs it is this, that it is a matter of mere indifference, and an opportunity firſt preſented in the Relief connection. He does not expreſs the ſmalleſt diſapprobation of the one, more than the other. I believe Seceders are ſeldom accuſed of flattering the reſpectable miniſters in the eſtabliſhed church; I imagine, however, that I eſteem them, as highly as Mr. H——n does; and make no queſtion, but there are ſome of them, at whoſe feet, both he and I may learn. At the ſame time, I apprehend, that the plainneſs of the Seceders, is juſt as commendable, as Mr. H—n's ſilence (or flattery rather) while they declare, that preciſely on account of theſe godly miniſters continuing in full connexion with courts, of whom the greater part preach another goſpel, and ſtrenuouſly oppoſe them with reſpect to the government, and diſcipline of the houſe of God; they cannot hold communion with them, without practically approving of this branch of their conduct. But, as Mr. H——n has no objection to this, the reader may judge, why he connected himſelf with the Relief.—He concludes this part, with telling us, That the Relief miniſters '*are doing the greateſt ſervice to the church of 'Scotland, as they keep the people under their inſpection, in the 'belief of her doctrines, as contained in her confeſſion.*' From the foregoing Sections, the reader may judge, whether the Relief, or the Seceſſion are moſt attached, to the doctrines of our Confeſſion. '*They hold their people in readineſs to fall 'back into her boſom.*' I apprehend, that would the eſtabliſhed church return to the purity of the doctrine, worſhip, diſcipline, and government of the houſe of God, the Seceſſion is as ready to fall back into her boſom, as the Relief, and as earneſtly wiſh to ſee the happy event.

But, perhaps, ſome may think, that Mr. H——n endeavours to hold his people in conſiderable readineſs to fall into the boſom of Prelacy, were it again eſtabliſhed. The difference, according to Mr. H——n, is only about uneſſential,

unimportant matters; and Preſbytery, he tells us, '*Is not re-* '*vealed ſo clearly*, &c.:' and, therefore, Epiſcopalians juſt as welcome to full communion as Preſbyterians. It is true, the Relief miniſters hold it unlawful for their people to join with Epiſcopalians. But, to adopt his own language concerning Seceders, if once Relievers were endowed with a temper and inclination, to eat their ſpiritual proviſion with their Epiſcopalian brethren of the ſame family; and not ſo conceited of their own ſuperior excellencies and attainments, as to ſay, to their younger brethren, Ye muſt ſit there at your own by-board; what ſhould reſtrain them from coaleſcing with their Epiſcopalian brethren, were Prelacy again become general? I would not wiſh to ſqueeze my opponent's principles; but, as far as I underſtand him, he maintains, that nothing uneſſential, or of leſs importance, ought to be a foundation for diviſion or ſeparation in the church of Chriſt. Now, Prelacy, he maintains, is one of theſe uneſſential, leſs important matters; and, therefore, were it become general, why ſhould he refuſe to coaleſce with his Epiſcopalian brethren, and foſter diviſion on account of a leſs important matter? And, therefore, our Author's ſcheme does appear to me, to hold his people in readineſs to fall into the boſom of Prelacy, as well as the eſtabliſhed church.

SECT. V.

Containing Animadverſions on the difference betwixt the Seceſſion and the Relief, concerning Toleration.

BEFORE our Author proceed to exhibit the material points of difference between him and Seceders, he ſtates a number of preliminary objections. Firſt we have a deſcant on Seceders holding communion with ſome of the godly miniſters in the eſtabliſhment, for ſometime after the Seceſſion commenced. To this, I anſwer, that as they could not know,

but their laudible endeavours, in the way of petitioning, remonſtrating, &c. might have the deſired effect, they might not ſee it their duty to be haſty in proceeding further; but when, inſtead of this, they ſaw matters, in their apprehenſion, becoming ſtill more diſagreeable, and defections increaſing, they might at laſt, ſee it their duty to proceed to the ſtep which they took. For a fuller account of this particular, I refer the reader to Mr. Ramſay's Review.

He informs us likewiſe, That HE HAS HEARD (and the public muſt be entertained with HEAR-SAYS!) two reaſons aſſigned, why Sceders ſtated a total ſeparation. '*One is, that the 'church, inſtead of reforming, was growing more and more 'degenerate.*' And can he refuſe, that this is ſo? Has ſhe not perſiſted in degeneracy, till the Relief has thought it proper to ſtate ſome ſort of a ſeparation from her? But, another reaſon he has heard, is, '*That this total ſeparation, was a po-'litical meaſure, in the firſt Seceding miniſters, to ſecure a 'following and party to themſelves.*' And he tells us, that it is enough for him to mention theſe reaſons, leaving others to judge, which of them is the true one. If he did not mean, that his reader ſhould conclude, that the laſt was the true one, he would not have given himſelf the trouble to mention it. I ſhall only obſerve, that if this was a political meaſure of the firſt Seceders, they were certainly men of very impolitic heads: For, it is eaſy for every one to ſee, that this was a ſtep which was much more likely to diminiſh, than encreaſe their followers. And as ſoon as it took place, their keen opponents could declare openly, that they had no more to fear from them. Nor, can I perſuade myſelf, that they were men ſo deſtitute of common ſagacity as not to forſee this: But, they preferred the dictates of judgment and conſcience, informed from the word of God, before a bait for the day, and a numerous adherence. I wiſh every denomination of profeſſors did the ſame. It muſt be owned, however, that the Relief miniſters have been much better ſkilled in political meaſures; for, ſince our Author muſt propal what *he has heard*, concerning our terms of communion; it can be no crime for me to mention, what *I have heard* concerning Relief terms of communion, namely, that the *ſcripture* was not at all conſulted at firſt inſtance, in fixing the Relief terms of communion. It was

pretty evident, that there was a general diſatisfaction with the eſtabliſhed church, on account of intruſions and legal doctrines: A general murmur at Seceders, becauſe their terms of communion were too confined, was equally evident. It was, therefore, very eaſy for the Relief miniſters to ſee, that ſome ſort of oppoſition to the eſtabliſhed church, only in theſe particulars, and terms of communion adopted, as extenſive as the generality of profeſſors could wiſh for, was likely to be a moſt engaging bait for the day. Accordingly, the terms of communion are ſettled on this advantageous ground; which has the liking of a thoughtleſs generation, to counterbalance every argument from ſcripture and reaſon. And then the word of God is ranſacked and wreſted, to ſupport the darling ſcheme, as our author has evidently done with the fourteenth of the Romans, of which afterward; and impending, inevitable ruin is denounced againſt all the diſſenters, who will not bow to the golden image. It is enough for me to mention this, and leave the reader to judge. But if Seceders and Relievers are to ſpend their time in publiſhing HEAR-SAYS concerning one another, they may perhaps very ſoon find a volume, little to the credit of either.

In page 2. after ſome ſevere reflections againſt Seceders, for making the burgeſs oath a term of communion, and ground of church cenſure; in which his arguments, or aſſertions rather, ſeem principally to turn againſt our Antiburgher brethren. He adds; '*But I have an objection to the lawfulneſs of the Burgher oath;—it blends the kingdom of Chriſt with the worldly kingdom;—it ſuſpends a liberty to trade, in the civil community, upon a religious condition.—I conſider it as a vile encroachment on the civil and natural rights of men, and too ſimilar in its complexion to what is ſaid of Antichriſt*,' Rev. xiii. 16, 17. And certainly, this controverſy has now got a final deciſion. The Antiburghers have been oppoſing it theſe thirty years and upwards: and ſtill the Burghers have made ſome ſort of reply; but they may now lay their hand upon their mouth, for Mr. H——n has an *objection* to it!

He ſeems to wiſh, that his reader ſhould conſider this as an objection of HIS OWN deviſing; and which had never made its appearance till now: by telling us, '*I have an objection;*' and '*none of the parties of Seceders can maintain its ſinfulneſs in*

'*this ſenſe.*' But, if the reader think ſo, he is very widely miſtaken; for in the laſt publication againſt the burgeſs-oath, which I have ſeen; and not long before Mr. H——n made his appearance, the author ſtates this very objection: perhaps ſome may think it was there Mr. H——n found it. But rather both of them have borrowed it from an Independent Letter-writer *; but neither of them are ſo diſcreet, as to give that gentleman the credit of his own argument. He has publiſhed it to the world a number of years ago; and one can ſcarcely read Mr. H——n's manner of ſtating the objection, and his, without concluding, that the one of them had it from the other. Mr. H——n ought to conclude then, that our Brethren, at leaſt, do not blend civil and religious matters as much as he inſinuates; for they can uſe this argument as freely as himſelf.

I may inform Mr. H——n, that however our Brethren and us differ, it is not very agreeable to us, to hear one another abuſed. Suppoſing this is Mr. H——n's own objection, if it is ſolid; why does he blame our Brethren for making the burgeſs oath a term of communion, and ground of church cenſure? It confounds *religion* and *civil* rights;—it is ſimilar to *Antichriſt*;—it ſuſpends a *liberty* to trade on a *religious* condition: this is certainly perſecution for conſcience ſake, which Mr. H——n maintains is the *very worſt branch* of Popery; and why not a ground of church cenſure? Mr. R—y, it muſt be owned, is in a very critical ſituation, if he make the burgeſs oath a ground of church cenſure; according to Mr. H——n, he is guilty of the '*curſed ungodlineſs of zeal*;' if he do not, he embraces the *very worſt* branch of Popery in his boſom.—Is this to uſe him diſcreetly?

But ſuppoſe my opponent is, for a little, commenced an *Antiburgher Relief-man*, an addition to the many ſtrange phenomena in our day; is he however conſiſtent? Are there no Burghers who are members of the Relief congregation at St. Ninian's? I am certain there are numbers of them in other Relief congregations. Does he cenſure them? We have never heard of it. He then allows them to maintain, *a vile encroachment* on the civil rights of men; yea, *perſecution for conſcience*

* Mr. Scot in Dundee.

ſake. Is blending the religion of the Son of God, with the civil rights of men, a vile encroachment on the civil rights of men; yea, the very worſt branch of Popery, become a mere *circumſtantial, unimportant* matter? If we compare Mr. H—n's aſſertions and practice, about the burgeſs oath, it muſt be ſo. I can aſſure Mr. H——n, the Burghers will not make choice of him to be umpire, between them and their brethren; becauſe they are not yet convinced, that, excluding Papiſts from having a conſiderable ſway in the management of the public affairs of the nation, (when Mr. H——n allows they ought not to be tolerated) will ever amount to ſuſpending a right to trade on a religious condition. And when there is no other difference between Burghers and Relievers, but Mr. H——n's unanſwerable objection, I hereby bind and oblige myſelf to looſe the gordian knot, with very little difficulty.

In page 3. The Seceders are belaboured to purpoſe, for endeavouring '*to ſit down (as they call it) upon certain civil* '*eſtabliſhments of religion;*' and for not endeavouring to build '*immediately upon the better foundation of the apoſtles and pro-*'*phets.*' I ſhall make this plain in a few words. It is true, Seceders did conſider both civil and eccleſiaſtical ſettlements of religion; as they apprehended they might receive ſome information from the one, as well as from the other, concerning the attainments of their anceſtors. But they are not yet convinced, after all this bluſter, that approving of what was done by their anceſtors, *as far only*, as agreeable to the word of God, and diſapproving of what was otherwiſe, was a ſitting down on ſettlements, either civil or eccleſiaſtic, to the neglect of the better foundation. He muſt have a very uncommon dexterity who can evince, that approving of what is agreeable to the word of God, and becauſe it is ſo; and diſapproving of what is inconſiſtent therewith, is to neglect the word of God, not only as the better, but as the ONLY foundation. I am not ignorant, that the phraſe, *attained-to reformation*, is ridiculed by perſons of different complexions. It is an expreſs direction of the apoſtle, however; *Whereto we have already* ATTAINED, *let us walk by the ſame rule*, Phil. iii. 16. It is very plain, from this ſcripture, that it is the duty of any church to hold by her former attainments; and wherein ſhe has come ſhort, to make progreſs in reformation. And though I mean not to aſſert,

as ſome have done, that divine directions are to no purpoſe, if we cannot comply with them; I aſſert, however, that it muſt be the peculiar unhappineſs of theſe men, who ſcornfully deride this direction of the apoſtle. And what have Seceders been guilty of? wherein have they exceeded this direction of an inſpired apoſtle? They conſidered what their anceſtors had done; they approved *as far as* appeared to them agreeable to the word of God: and it would ſurely require ſome better proof, than bare aſſertion, that this was a ſitting down on civil eſtabliſhments. Were I diſpoſed to adopt a method of reaſoning, ſometimes uſed by my opponent, I might tell him, that were the apoſtle now living, he would addreſs him in the following manner: 'Why, Paul, much learning was once ſuppoſed to 'have made you mad; and muſt Seceding biggotry and ſuper-'ſtition do it a ſecond time? What! walk by the rule of your 'attainments, to the neglect of the better foundation!'—His ſtrong aſſertions, however, may have ſome effect with a number of the ignorant and prejudiced; but will have little weight with the intelligent and impartial part of religious profeſſors, who are friendly diſpoſed to the truth, as contained in the volume of inſpiration.

But before he proceed to the proper buſineſs of this branch of his performance, he has the Seceſſion to ſtrip of a variety of particulars, which are none of its peculiarities. In page 4. it would ſeem, he either imagines that the Seceſſion has claimed theſe things as its peculiarities; or otherwiſe that the generation were in ſome hazard of conſidering them as its peculiarities.

1. '*The ſyſtem of grace, or capital and fundamental arti-'cles of the goſpel, are no part of their peculiar ſcheme.*' It is ſo far good, that he allows the ſyſtem of grace is preached by the Seceders. We are, however, far from pretending, or wiſhing to monopolize the goſpel, as he inſinuates, or to confine this ſyſtem to ourſelves. We readily grant, that there are miniſters in the eſtabliſhment who preach the goſpel in its purity; and are heartily ſorry that their number is ſo ſmall: if we may credit Mr. H———n, the far greater part of them preach *another* goſpel. But he boldly aſſerts, '*The ſame ſyſtem of evangelical 'doctrines is taught by every miniſter of Relief.*' Here it may naturally be be aſked, how is our Author certain of this?

Has he heard EVERY *miniſter* of Relief preach? And has he heard EVERY *one* of them preach on ALL the *capital*, and *fundamental* doctrines of the goſpel? If he has not, how comes he to be ſo very confident? The ſame ſyſtem of evangelical doctrine is preached by every one of them; and how *ridiculous* is the proof he adduces to confirm this aſſertion! '*As* (ſaith he) '*the reader will perceive by peruſing the firſt part of this pamphlet.*' Though all the Relief miniſters had ſubſcribed the ſyſtem of principles laid down in Mr. H——n's pamphlet; *even that* would have been no direct proof that they all preach them; for Mr. H——n will own, that it is no uncommon thing, for miniſters to ſubſcribe *one* ſyſtem and preach *another*. But, when the public have no evidence, that the ſyſtem of principles publiſhed in Mr. H——n's pamphlet hath the *approbation* of *every* miniſter of Relief; how *abſurd* is it to adduce this as a *proof*, that every one of them preach HIS ſyſtem! He might juſt as well have aſſerted, that every miniſter of Relief approves of his *ſcurrility* to Mr. Ramſay; and adduced, for proof, *as the Reader may ſee by peruſing the* APPENDIX *to this pamphlet*. And even granting, that the principles contained in the publications of Meſſrs. Hutchiſon, Neil, and Baine, are theſe which are taught by *every* Relief miniſter, I leave the reader to judge, from the remarks I have made upon theſe performances, whether the Relief miniſters preach the *goſpel* in its *purity*. So that, if the Seceſſion have no rival but the Relief, the purity of the goſpel will ſtill remain one of its peculiarities.

2. '*To maintain the form of Preſbyterian church-government* '*to be agreeable to the word of God, and the form of govern-* '*ment appointed therein for the New-Teſtament church, is no* '*peculiar part of the Seceſſion ſcheme; for all the Relief miniſters* '*do the ſame, and others of different denominations.*' He might juſt have ſaid, that Preſbyterians in general maintain this. But to maintain a thing in principle, and to be conſcientious and regular in the practice of it, are very different things. And therefore, granting Mr. H——n's aſſertion; yet ſtill the *regular exerciſe* of Preſbyterian church-government may be one of the peculiarities of the Seceſſion. Beſides, if he is not more explicit ſome where elſe than he is here, perhaps ſome may apprehend, that he intends to leave room for ſome different form of government, if it ſhould be judged neceſſary. He aſſerts, indeed,

that it is *the form*; but not that it is *the* ONLY *form* appointed. Perhaps ſome will allow, that Preſbytery is *the form*, who will not allow that it is the ONLY form appointed in the New-Teſtament church.

3. '*To believe the Weſtminſter Confeſſion of Faith is no peculiar part of the Seceſſion ſcheme; for all the Relief miniſters, at their ordination, ſolemnly acknowledge the ſame as the confeſſion of their faith.*' It is certainly agreeable, when a compoſer of ſyſtems is conſiſtent with himſelf. He aſſerts afterward, and juſtly, that terms of communion are to be learned from the word alone; but inveighs very keenly againſt any thing being a term of communion, which had not an exiſtence for fifteen hundred years after the apoſtles were laid in their graves. He will certainly allow, that the terms of miniſterial, as well as Chriſtian communion, are to be learned from the word alone. Why then ſhould the Relief make the believing the Weſtminſter Confeſſion of faith a term of miniſterial communion, ſince that Confeſſion had not an exiſtence for fifteen hundred years after the venerable apoſtles were laid in their graves? It ought certainly to be diſmiſſed with *oaths* and *teſtimonies*, and other creatures of yeſterday's date.

But our author might as well have ſaid, that this is no peculiarity of the Seceſſion, becauſe (as he has aſſerted in the ſecond part of his pamphlet) all the *legaliſts* and *intruders* in the eſtabliſhed church, ſolemnly profeſs their belief of the Weſtminſter confeſſion: and then the reader would have been ſenſible, that in this particular he diveſts the Seceſſion *only* of a mere pretence.

Although there is a profeſſed belief, if faith and practice diſagree, there is ſtill room left for a very material peculiarity. And who are they that receive any information by our author telling them, that other denominations, as well as the Seceſſion, profeſs to believe the doctrines of the Weſtminſter confeſſion? This is ſtripping the Seceſſion naked indeed. Beſides, this looks as like ſitting down on the attainments of our anceſtors, as approving of other branches of their conduct.

4. '*To maintain, that Chriſtian congregations have a right to chuſe their own miniſters, is no part of the peculiar ſcheme of Seceders; for every Relief miniſter maintains the ſame.*' But have they maintained this? It is publiſhed to the world,

by one who had the beſt acceſs to know, being in the midſt of ſome of their congregations, that they have allowed *proprietors* and *contributors* to give a call; and miniſters to *accept* of, and be *ſettled* upon ſuch a call: and that a liberal contribution has conſtituted ſome men *viſible* ſaints, who had very little elſe about them reſembling the character †. And it is very evident, Mr. H——n makes an exceeding poor defence. It is true, he ſtates this as one of Mr. Ramſay's falſhoods; but he cannot deny, nay, it will deny for no man, that it has been done: and did theſe miniſters, or theſe who ſettled them, maintain the Chriſtian people's right to chuſe their own paſtors? But, perhaps, they have now refrained from that practice.—The Seceſſion, therefore, after all this doughty diſmantling-match, if it has only the Relief to compete with, may juſtly claim the *purity* of the goſpel, as one of its peculiarities; and, perhaps, the *regular exerciſe* of government and diſcipline alſo. But, this is only flouriſhing his armour a little in the entry. The Seceſſion, thus unvailed, he proceeds to attack it in good earneſt; and his material points of difference are,

1. '*Their antitoleration principles.* 2. *The article of occa-*
'*ſional hearing.* 3. *The unſcriptural narrowneſs of their*
'*terms of communion.*' Before he enter upon theſe, he tells us, That he chearfully acknowledges, '*that the Seceders are*
'*a reſpectable body of men.*' It is very probable, he was conſcious, that the account he was about to give of them, was inconſiſtent enough with ſuch a character: For, if the reader compare this with the almoſt innumerable virulent reproaches which follow, I may aſk him, if ever he ſaw a more ſtriking picture of Joab, taking Amaſa by the beard to kiſs him?

In page 5, he proceeds to the diſcuſion of his firſt material point of difference with the Seceſſion, namely, their *antitoleration principles.* This is a charge altogether groundleſs. Mr. H——n endeavours to inſtruct it, from Seceders approving of the obligation of the ſolemn league, and ſolemn-league uniformity. I have anſwered this already. Seceders do approve of the Reformation between 1638, and 1650, in the general; and conſider it as one of the beſt reformed periods of the church, in theſe iſles of the ſea. But it does not follow from this, that they approve of every particular *ſentiment* of

† Relief Scheme conſidered.

theirs, or of every *branch* of their conduct. Very far from it. —And there is no inconſiſtency between approving of that uniformity; and diſapproving of any extreme in the *manner* of enforcing it. Our anceſtors were in a very peculiar ſituation. Theſe who were enemies to the covenants, were alſo enemies to the ſtate; to their civil and religious peace at once. And, in the midſt of public diſorder and confuſion, it might, perhaps, be difficult, to preſerve a proper diſtinction between civil and religious matters. It may likewiſe be true, that they carried their notions of uniformity to too great a height. But, it does not follow, becauſe Seceders approve of that reformation in general, that they alſo approve of this in particular. Nay, although Seceders had approven of this at firſt, which by the by, as it is evident from their teſtimony, they did not, it does not follow, that they are now chargeable with it, any more than it follows, that Mr. H——n is chargeable with lodging the right of chooſing a miniſter, in the hands of proprietors and contributors, becauſe this was done in the Relief at firſt. He has publicly diſclaimed it; and ſo have Seceders intolerant principles.

Perhaps, Mr. H——n may alledge, that I am not very well acquainted with the hiſtory of theſe times; and it would be no great loſs to himſelf, to be rather better acquainted with them. When flouriſhing a little about the prevalence of anti-tolerant principles, in former ages, he tells us, page 13, '*Elizabeth, a queen of great accompliſhments; and, in her religious ſentiments, hoſtile to Popery; but ſuperſtitiouſly fond of epiſcopacy, and enforced another uniformity to her favourite ſyſtem. This obliged many of the Puritan non-conformiſts, to ſeek a ſanctuary in the wilds of America, where they might obtain religious liberty.*' But if our Author pleaſe to conſult Mr. Neil's hiſtory of the Puritans, and Mather's hiſtory of New England, he will perhaps find, that it was near *twenty* years after the death of queen Elizabeth, before there were any emigrations of Puritan non-conformiſts to America. Queen Elizabeth died March 24th, 1603. The firſt colony of Puritans which croſſed the Atlantic, ſet ſail from Plymouth, the ſixth of September 1620; and landed at Cope Cod in New England, 9th of November. He ought, either to be better acquainted with the tranſactions of theſe times; or, at leaſt,

refrain from inſulting reflections on others, for ignorance of them.

He likewiſe attempts, to inſtruct this charge from our Act and Teſtimony. '*From the Judicial Teſtimony, then it is evi-*
'*dent, that the Reformation Seceders, contend for—is an uni-*
'*formity in—doctrines,—worſhip,—and government, to be*
'*enforced, by the power and ſword of the civil magiſtrate, on*
'*all ranks of perſons, without toleration to any.*' This, he deſires his reader CAREFULLY to keep in memory, which he had reaſon to do; for he is ſo fond of his own brat, that he muſt be hugging it on every occaſion. I may inform the reader, that if this is evident from our Teſtimony, it is more than I underſtand. It is true, as I have already obſerved, Seceders diſapprove of an *active*, or *poſitive* toleration of hereſies of every ſort, which appears to them to be the next ſtep, at leaſt, to eſtabliſhing *iniquity by a law*. But I know none of their *declared principles*, which are inconſiſtent with a *negative* or *paſſive* toleration; or which approve of the civil ſword, ſcaffolds and gibbets, fire and fagot to force men to profeſs this or that religious ſyſtem.

But we muſt conſider Mr. H——n's proof, that this is contained in our Teſtimony; and, it is this, page 5. '*In their*
'*Judicial Teſtimony, — they condemn all the tolerations, that*
'*ever took place in Britain, ſince the reformation.*' A concluſive argument indeed! If our Author had evinced, that there is no other poſſible mode of toleration, but ſuch as have taken place in Britain already, his argument would have ſome weight: But this will certainly be a difficult taſk, attempt it when he will; and without this, his aſſertion has not the ſhadow of an argument. I am perſuaded, our Author would not conſider it as very ſolid reaſoning, if I ſhould conclude, that becauſe the Spirit of God diſapproved of all the kings who reigned over the ten tribes, he diſapproved of the kingly office. Or, to come nearer home, becauſe the Relief diſapproves of all the different denominations of Preſbyterians in Britain, therefore, they diſapprove of Preſbytery itſelf. This is juſt of a piece with his reaſoning, Seceders diſapprove of all the tolerations which have taken place in Great Britain; therefore, they diſapprove of toleration itſelf, and maintain bloody principles. And on ſuch a futile argument, to deſire his reader carefully

to keep this in memory, was juſt, in other words, to tell his reader, that he conſidered him as a *mere ignorant fool*, or as one who would credit him with implicit faith.

The toleration our Teſtimony condemns, is an *almoſt boundleſs* toleration; and when they aſſert, that a toleration of *this ſort* is contrary to the word of God, it plainly enough implies, that the compilers were of opinion, that there is a toleration of *another ſort*, conſiſtent with the word of God, and inconſiſtent enough with bloody principles.

If there were any occaſion to ſhew, that Seceders from firſt to laſt have diſapproved of bloody principles, or compulſory methods of forcing men by civil pains, to profeſs this or that religious ſyſtem, I might obſerve, 1. That in the Synod ſermon, which was the occaſion, in part, of the commencing of the Seceſſion, Mr. Erſkine aſſerts, that 'what makes a flouriſhing church, is not her connection with *civil powers*, but with 'the *chief-corner ſtone*.' 2. In their anſwers to Mr. Nairn, they declare concerning the office of the civil magiſtrate, that he is to exerciſe it for the good of ſociety, 'without aſſuming 'any *lordſhip* immediately over *men's conſciences*, or making 'any encroachment upon the ſpecial buſineſs, and privileges 'of the church.' 3. In the Re-Exhibition of the Teſtimony, p. 90, 91. they declare, 'Though it muſt be acknowledged, 'that the enforcing of religious duties with civil penalties; and, 'in too many inſtances, blending the affairs of church and 'ſtate with one another, is totally *inconſiſtent* with the ſpiritual 'nature of Chriſt's kingdom.'—But I need not inſiſt on this, for Mr. H——n acknowledges, that both parties of Seceders have publickly declared their diſapprobation of compulſory meaſures, to force men to profeſs this or that religious ſyſtem. Why then ſhould he ſpend twenty pages in exclaiming againſt them for maintaining ſuch principles, when he has not ſo much as the ſhadow of a proof, that it is contained in their Teſtimony? It is cuſtomary for princes, ſometimes to order their generals to exhibit a *mock fight*; perhaps Mr. H——n intended to amuſe his readers a little, by diſplaying his *dexterity* at an engagement of this ſort.

His deſign, however, is conſiderably evident; he is very fond to repreſent us, as perſons who would head or hang all who differ from us, if we had power in our hand. A princi-

ple, or diſpoſition, which I am certain we abhor as much as he can do. The reader will therefore allow me to mention a ſingle evidence of our Author's own diſpoſition, and to put a ſingle queſtion. A clergyman in my neighbourhood, whoſe character, both as a miniſter and Chriſtian, is as well eſtabliſhed as any of his ſtanding, unfortunately happening to detect the peculiarities of the Relief ſcheme; immediately, according to Mr. H——n, he is deceitful, '*a blood-thirſty aſſaſſin; a waſpiſh, petulant defamer; and the grand diſtinguiſhing features of the parent (Satan), characteriſe the ſon.*' † I cannot tell what we might expect from a *Billinſgate wench*, or an *enraged dragoon*; but it muſt certainly ſurprize the public, to hear ſuch things drop from the *honey-flowing lips of Catholic love!*—Compare this with the ſevereſt animadverſions ever publiſhed by Seceders; and I can, with all freedom, put my queſtion, by aſking the reader, Whether he would expect greateſt forbearance from Seceders, or a man who can write at this rate, had he power in his hand?

We ought to put the moſt favourable conſtruction on every part of our Brother's conduct, however, that it can well bear. It is very probable, he found himſelf conſiderably diſtreſt by Mr. Ramſay, and could not very eaſily find a reply; and oppreſſion, we are certain, makes a wiſe man mad; and a drowning man will graſp at whatever comes nigh him. But if we conſider Mr. H——n, repreſenting his opponent as '*one in heart, counſel, and operation, with the accuſer of the Brethren;*'—his northern brother rebuking, or conjuring the Seceder fiend, and purſuing the mole into its hole;—the celebrated Falkirk letter-writer, whoever he is, arranging Mr. Ramſay's lies into proper departments; it would ſeem that arguments of this ſort are the grand diſtinguiſhing feature, which characterizes the publications of a certain denomination of miniſters in our day: and they are little better calculated for informing the judgment, than civil pains; and are no great indication of a diſlike of compulſory meaſures. They would ſeem determined to convince the world, by their publications, that their pretenſions to Catholic love are a mere impoſition. The truth of the matter ſeems to be one of theſe two. They either apprehend that Seceders are ſo deteſted, that the more they revile them, the

† Mr. Hutchiſon's celebrated Appendix.

more they will raiſe their own reputation, and ingratiate themſelves with the public: or otherwiſe, whatever noiſe they make about biggotry, they are ſo biggotted to their own ſcheme, that no ſooner are they contradicted, than they are in a tranſport of paſſion, and forget all decency, which is no great evidence of a good cauſe.

His firſt material charge againſt the Seceſſion then, turns out to be a *hum*; for, Seceders do not maintain bloody principles, and are no way afraid to have their ſentiments, on this article, tried at the bar of ſcripture and reaſon. It is true, individuals among us, may carry their notions of the magiſtrate's power ſomething higher than I have done; and if Mr. H——n have no better arguments than he has adduced as yet, he will perhaps find occaſion for all his dexterity to anſwer them, without ſubſtituting *reviling* in the place of argument: And, none of us will carry it the lengths with which he charges us. And we have, as a body, publicly declared our diſapprobation of compulſory meaſures; an evidence in what ſenſe we underſtand our Teſtimony: And we have the vanity to think, that we underſtand it as well as Mr. H——n.

SECT. VI.

Containing Animadverſions on the difference between the Seceſſion and the Relief, concerning occaſional Hearing.

IN page 21, he proceeds to diſcuſs the ſecond material point of difference, on which he is exceeding ſhort; perhaps well knowing, that it was a very ſuperfluous branch of his work. When he was to prove, beyond contradiction (as he ſeems to think) the lawfulneſs of full communion with every miniſter, who is a viſible ſaint, the lawfulneſs of occaſional hearing, behoved certainly to be eſtabliſhed; unleſs, that without hearing, we may join in ſealing ordinances.

He informs his reader on this article, that both parties in

the Seceſſion, hold occaſional hearing to be unlawful. But, he is in a particular manner incenſed at the Burghers, becauſe they '*ſuffer their people to paſs with impunity, though they are* '*ſometimes chargeable with the crime of occaſional hearing.—If* '*this is not Latitudinarianiſm, to ſuffer public and viſible offen-* '*ders to eſcape without public church cenſure, I leave the im-* '*partial world to judge. To reconcile ſuch a practice with* '*the ſcriptural rule of diſcipline, is not, I ſuppoſe, a taſk pro-* '*per for men of an ordinary acumen.*' But, Mr. H—— n ſhould remember, that he has a number of Burgeſſes who are members of his congregation;—and, that their oath confounds the religion of the Son of God, with the civil rights of men;—it is a vile encroachment on the civil rights of men;—it reſembles Antichriſt, *&c.* According to Mr. H——n then, it is certainly a public, a viſible ſin, to ſwear ſuch an oath. But, does he cenſure his hearers for ſwearing it? We have never heard of it: he ſuffers public viſible offenders to paſs with impunity. He may exerciſe his uncommon acumen, in reconciling this contradiction with the ſcriptural rule of diſcipline; and I ſhall give a different reply, at the end of the Section.

Having aſſerted, page 23, that we hold it unlawful, for our people to hear in the Relief, he adds, '*If this proceeds* '*from a fearful apprehenſion, that ſome of the Seceſſion ſheep,* '*by wandering into Relief paſtures, may find the food ſo ſweet* '*and nouriſhing, as to endanger their returning to the fold and* '*paſture of the Aſſociation, I can eaſily perceive a conſiderable* '*degree of the ſerpent's cunning,*' &c.

I may hear inform my reader, that Mr. H——n is right for once; he has hit the nail on the head exactly. A variety of the doctrines contained in his own ſyſtem, and other Relief doctrines mentioned in two former ſections †, are ſo ſweet and nouriſhing to depraved nature, that we are not certain of the Seceſſion ſheep being proof againſt them, any more than others. If we could credit the Relief doctrine, '*That if men would* '*take heed to themſelves, they need not be deceived,*' it might relieve us in part, from theſe *fearful apprehenſions*: But, though this ſhould be the attainment of the flock, who are fed in the ſweet and nouriſhing paſtures of the Relief, it has the

† See above, Sect. II. p. 59,—113. Sect. III. p. 114,—134.

misfortune to contradict Him who is truth itself; and, therefore, our fears must continue. I cannot agree with our Author, however, in judging it any degree of the serpent's cunning, to dissuade our hearers from countenancing such doctrines: To me, at least, it has a much greater appearance of the serpent's cunning, to propagate and spread such doctrines, with flaming pretensions to the freedom of gospel grace. But, if he means, that we are afraid our people will be convinced, that the gospel is more purely, or even more agreeably preached in the Relief, I can assure him for myself, that I have no apprehension, that either our people, or any other, who understand their Bible aright, will think so. He adds,

'*If the Seceders would not be offended, I would for once in-*
'*form them, that a timidity of this kind, is now generally*
'*viewed, by men of judgment and discernment, as the reason*
'*why it is held unlawful, by Seceders, to hear occasionally any*
'*worthy ministers.*' I could have little objection to our Author's obliging information, providing, he had also informed his reader, that he considers RELIEVERS, and MEN OF DISCERNMENT, as words of the same import. No doubt, *They are the men, and wisdom will die with them.* If he would not be offended, I would likewise inform him, that men of judgment and discernment, and who are in connection neither with the Secession nor Relief, have candidly given a much better reason for our disapproving of occasional hearing. But, after all, what does our Author mean, by laying so much weight on the opinion of the *discerning* men of our day; if he does not mean, that only his own connections are such? Not many *wise* are called; this is certainly little better, than *sitting down* on the attainments of our ancestors. It may be true, that they view our sentiments concerning occasional hearing, in the disagreeable light which our Author mentions: But, I may inform him for once, that these *descerning* men now, as generally view the ministers of Relief, approving of occasional hearing, as a *political measure* to secure a *following* to themselves. And, is either his opinion or mine, better or worse on this account? And to what purpose then his important information?

He seems to be particularly offended, because we disapprove of our people hearing in the Relief. '*And especially, they hold*
'*it unlawful to hear the ministers of Relief.*' I am certain,

I have never made any ſpeciality of one ſort or other in this matter; and were I to do ſo, I know no reaſon why I ſhould allow my people to hear in the Relief, rather than the eſtabliſhed church. I have all reaſonable ſatisfaction, that there are miniſters in the eſtabliſhed church, who will not preach ſuch doctrines as I have mentioned in two preceding ſections *.

He alledges, page 24, that before we diſſuade our people from hearing in the Relief, we ought '*to prove from the word* '*of God, that the Relief miniſters do not preach the goſpel;* '*which, for reaſons ſufficiently obvious, I ſuppoſe,* (ſays he,) '*none of them will attempt to do.*' He is convinced, by this time, once and again, that in ſuch a ſuppoſition he was very much miſtaken. And, although there were reaſons ſufficiently obvious, before his religious ſyſtem made its appearance, why Seceders ſhould refuſe, that the goſpel is purely preached in the Relief; the number of obvious reaſons is conſiderably increaſed by that performance. He has, therefore, both given, and aſſigned a reaſon, why we ſhould diſſuade our people from hearing in the Relief: For he allows, that it is unlawful to hear *unſound preachers;* and a variety of the Relief doctrines, mentioned in two former ſections, are very unſound *; and from which (to uſe one of his own ſneers) an *aſſociate*, whether pure or impure, may catch pernicious infection. He has a variety of other puzzling interrogatories, concerning their licence, call, and ordination, *&c.* which being wide enough off the point in hand, I ſhall paſs. And however hard they may appear unto the queriſt, the reader may find the whole of them anſwered to purpoſe, in Mr. Ramſay's Review. He likewiſe informs his reader, That it is '*an unjuſt and ſenſeleſs calumny,*' that they are not coming forward in reformation. I could here join with him, *in one point*, providing I could conſider his performance, as a judicial declaration of Relief principles. For once, *proprietors* and *contributors* elected their miniſters, which was not the order of the firſt Chriſtian churches; now, he aſſures us, it is not their way; and, I wiſh to credit him in this, if facts do not again contradict it.

I would here deſire the reader to obſerve, that Mr. H——n aſſerts very confidently, that we maintain occaſional hearing to be *unlawful*, a *viſible public ſin*, &c. Now, he frequently

* See above, Sect. II. p. 59,—113. Sect. III. p. 114,—134.

mentions our *Standard books*, and *books of received principles*; he ought, certainly, to have informed his reader, in which of theſe *Standard books*, he might find us maintaining, that occaſional hearing, in *every caſe* or *circumſtance*, is *unlawful*, or *ſinful*. That it is ſo in a variety of caſes, and that a habit of it is unlawful, Mr. H——n allows; and, why not caution our hearers againſt it?—And, if he could have ſpecified any of our Standard books, where we maintain it to be *ſinful* in *every caſe*, the reader may be certain, he would have heard of it. Beſides, a thing may be lawful, but inexpedient; and this a ſufficient foundation for cautioning againſt it. And, I could wiſh to know the ſcriptural rule of diſcipline, for making every ſuch thing a term of communion, and ground of church cenſure; if it is not habitual, or perſiſted in.—So much for anſwer to my opponent.

I ſhall only obſerve further, on this article, that it is ſuppoſed as yet, that *full communion* is unlawful; if it is not, why ſtate a ſeparation at all? It will readily be granted, that we ought to be ſure of a ſcripture foundation, for every *diſtinction* we make about religious matters. I would therefore recommend it to theſe, who view *full communion* as unlawful, but *occaſional hearing* as a duty; to conſider, where they will find a warrant for ſuch a *diſtinction* in the word of God. If they cannot, they are certainly ſubſtituting their own humour, in the room of the unerring rule. But, I have no occaſion to enlarge on this: For further ſatisfaction, I refer the reader to Mr. Ramſay's Review.

SECT. VII.

Containing Animadverſions on the Relief Terms of Communion.

OUR Author conſiders this as one of the principal differences between the Seceſſion and the Relief; and therefore handles it much more copiouſly than any of the former

articles, although his work might have been very much ſhortened, had he refrained from his numerous extraneous reflections, which have very little connection with the point in hand.

That the reader may ſee the plan on which he proceeds, I ſhall juſt mention his particular branches, which are eight in number. 1. Seceders ſet an example of that communion which the Relief plead for. 2. The terms of communion are fixed in the word of God. 3. Theſe only have a right to the ſeals of the covenant, in the ſight of God, who are brought within the bond of the covenant. 4. The viſibility of ſaintſhip, before the world, entitles men to communion in the eye of the church. 5. When viſible ſaints fall into open and viſible violations of the divine law, they are to be excluded, till they make ſolemn public profeſſion of repentance. 6. Perfect unanimity in every thing in religion, is not neceſſary to Chriſtian fellowſhip. 7. To conſider a few paſſages of ſcripture, uſually urged by Seceders for their plan of communion. 8. To enquire whoſe table the ſacramental table is.—The reader may here ſee his plan; and it is not *theſe* particulars, but the *illuſtration* we diſapprove of. I ſhall conſider them in order.

1. ‘ *It is obſervable,—that Seceders themſelves have ſet an* ‘ *example of that very communion which the Relief body now* ‘ *plead for. It is well known, that for a conſiderable time af-* ‘ *ter the commencement of the Seceſſion, the Seceding miniſters* ‘ *declared their willingneſs, to hold communion with thoſe* ‘ *miniſters and Chriſtians of the eſtabliſhed church, who were* ‘ *contending againſt her defections,*’ p. 27.

I have anſwered this already, when conſidering Mr. H——n's *hearſay* † concerning our ſtating a total ſeparation. They might very juſtly conſider it is their duty, not to break up communion wholly with the godly miniſters in the eſtabliſhment, till they were convinced that every ſcriptural method of redreſs from her judicatories was ineffectual. Beſides, matters are now on a different footing. 1. The judicatories of the church are *much more* chargeable with defection *now*, than when the Seceſſion commenced; and therefore the conduct of theſe godly miniſters, and private Chriſtians, who continue in full connection with them, is more criminal and offenſive. 2. The miniſters in the eſtabliſhed church, who are reckoned upon the

† See above, Sect. V. p. 141,—144.

honeſt ſide, are not as faithful in contending againſt her defections; nor do they carry their teſtimony to as great a length, as numbers of them at that time did. 3. It was reaſonable, that private Chriſtians, in the communion of the eſtabliſhed church, ſhould have time to conſider deliberately her defections, and the grounds of the Seceſſion; but there can be no pretence to forbearance on that footing now, when they have had upwards of forty years to ponder theſe matters. Our Author's queſtion therefore, '*If it was lawful then, how has it become* '*unlawful now?*' like the moſt part of his other queries, admits of a very plain and eaſy reply. I might aſk, in my turn, if it was lawful for proprietors and contributors to elect miniſters at the commencing of the Relief, how has it become unlawful now? And the example of Seceders can be no precedent; for it was fifteen hundred years after the venerable apoſtles were laid in their graves, and our Author's argumentative *forſooth*, p. 28, can overturn this part of their conduct, as well as their judicial deciſions.

He tells us, in the ſame page, that for theſe who appear to be the members of Chriſt's myſtical body, to have fellowſhip in the ordinances of the goſpel, (in other words, Relief terms of communion) is *evidently* the genius and ſpirit of the New Teſtament. He is certainly very prodigal of his labour, to ſpend ſixty pages, in eſtabliſhing a point, which was evident before he began his proof. The reader may eaſily ſee, that his firſt particular, is no proof of his point at all: He proceeds to his ſecond, page 29.

2. '*I obſerve, that the terms of admiſſion to, and excluſion* '*from the ſacred ſupper, are unalterably fixed, by the great* '*Head of the church himſelf, and to be learned from his word* '*alone.*' There is very little worth obſerving on this particular, as I know none who deny the poſition; and, Mr. H——n knows himſelf, if he *really* credited what he wrote, when he tells us, that he entertains a *ſuſpicion*, that Seceders will find fault with him for maintaining this. We have here a long winding ſtory, in a foot note, concerning a difference betwixt him and a neighbouring Burgher clergyman. He informs us, in the beginning of his Appendix, '*The miniſters of the Relief,* '*as the ambaſſadors of the Prince of peace, were employed in* '*preaching the doctrines of ſalvation, by the croſs, ſerving God*

'*in a peaceable manner*, &c.' High ſounding eulogiums! *Let another praiſe thee, a ſtranger, and not thine own lips.* But, it is very evident, from his own account of this matter, that he *attacked* what he thought, and wiſhed his hearers to conſider as Seceſſion principles; and, therefore, the *peaceable ambaſſador* was certainly the aggreſſor. He informs us alſo, that the Burgher clergyman was ſo enraged, that '*he railed* '*againſt me, a whole ſermon, made me his text, an honour,* '*of which, I never thought myſelf worthy.*' Here he diſcovers his ſtrick attachment to truth, in aſſerting, that the Burgher clergyman railed at him a *whole ſermon;* for, it is a certain fact, it was only a few cautions *after* ſermon in the forenoon. He accuſes the Burgher clergyman, for refuting him on the vague report of his hearers; and, it is not unlikely, that the vague report of his *own* hearers has led him into the path of falſhood; and is himſelf the very thing he blames. I cannot think, however, although the Burgher clergyman had made the refuting of Mr. H——n's aſſertions the matter of a ſermon, that there would have been much propriety, in ſaying, he made him his text, more than in ſaying, that the apoſtle made the *Legaliſts* at Rome and Galatia his text, in his epiſtles to theſe churches. The apoſtle conſidered it as his duty, under divine direction, to make the refutting of their errors, a conſiderable branch of his epiſtles to theſe churches; as a mean of reclaiming the Legaliſts themſelves, or at leaſt of preventing others from being infected; but there would be very little propriety, in ſaying, he made them his text. And, it is very likely, that ſuch of them as were not reclaimed, would have had no objection to bequeath that branch of honour done them, as a legacy to Mr. H——n; as Papiſts are ſaid to leave their works of ſupererogation, as a legacy to their heirs in their latter-will.

He informs us, in his foot note, of three obſervations made by him, concerning terms of communion, which were ſo offenſive to his neighbouring clergyman, 1. That our covenants ought not to be terms of communion; 2. Nor enforced as ſtate uniformities; and, 3. That nothing, that had not an exiſtence for one thouſand, five hundred years after Chriſt and his apoſtles, ought to be a term of Chriſtian fellowſhip. And, he confidently puts us to a defiance, to diſprove theſe obſervations.

In our *preſent ſituation*, the Burghers have no quarrel with him about his firſt obſervation. We have as little quarrel with him about the ſecond; for we maintain nothing more about *enforced ſtate uniformities*, than what is contained in our Weſtminſter Confeſſion; and Mr. H——n aſſures the public, that all the Relief miniſters, at their ordination, ſolemnly acknowledge the ſame, as the confeſſion of their faith. Accordingly, notwithſtanding of his bold defiance, he has diſproved his third obſervation to our hand; for the Weſtminſter Confeſſion had not an exiſtence, for one thouſand, five hundred years after Chriſt. Perhaps, it may be replied, that the matter of it is contained in the word of God. But, if this is a ſufficient reaſon for eſtabliſhing it a term of communion, it will diſprove his firſt obſervation alſo: For, the *matter* of covenanting, both in precept and practice, is contained in the word of God; and Mr. H——n cannot prove, that it is not a moral duty: and he maintains, that the neglect of any moral duty, is a ground of church cenſure; and conſequently a term of communion. It diſproves his ſecond obſervation likewiſe; for Seceders maintain nothing concerning ſtate uniformities, but what is contained in the word.—We are certainly indebted to him for performing the arduous work of diſproving his own obſervations; for, we maintain nothing as a term of communion, the matter of which is not contained in the word of God. And, why ſhould the Relief make that a term of miniſterial communion, which had no exiſtence, for one thouſand five hundred years after Chriſt? The terms of miniſterial communion, are as certainly in the word of God, as the terms of Chriſtian communion are. The Burgher clergyman, might very juſtly conſider the third obſervation, as a *deſigned attack*, at leaſt on Seceſſion principles, becauſe we conſider an approbation of the Weſtminſter Confeſſion of Faith, as a juſt and neceſſary term of communion in the preſent day, and had certainly as good a right to defend them, as Mr. H——n had to attack them. He is extremely fond to have his neighbouring clergyman at the bar of the public; and, I ſhould be very fond to ſee it; however, it would ſeem, he conſiders it as below him: But, Mr. H——n's performance has rendered ſeverals as ready to meet him at the bar of the public, as his heart can wiſh.

I may remark further, that he is as unhappy in his quotation of ſcripture, on this particular, as can well be imagined. In order to ſhew, that terms of communion are fixed in the word, he tells us, page 31, 32. that the New Teſtament is concluded with this declaration, '*If any man ſhall add unto thoſe things, God ſhall add unto him the plagues which are written in this book. And if any man ſhall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God ſhall take away his part out of the book of life.*' In order to make this quadrate with Relief terms of communion, the apoſtle's declaration ſhould have run, 'Let a man take away as many circumſtantial, leſs important, uneſſential words of this prophecy as he will; but, he muſt not take away eſſentials, or fundamentals; or God will take away his part out of the book of life.'

I might now paſs this ſecond particular, as the reader will eaſily ſee, that it makes nothing for the Relief, or againſt the Seceſſion; but, I muſt offer a remark or two, on ſome of Mr. H——n's aſſertions in the illuſtration of it. He tells us, page 32, That his neighbouring clergyman maintained, in juſtification of the Seceſſion terms of communion, that they were the very ſame, with the terms of communion obſerved by the church of Scotland, in the ſecond reformation period. And adds, '*I beg leave to inform the gentleman and the public, that it is a downright falſhood, to ſay, that the terms of communion in the Burgher Seceſſion, are the ſame with thoſe of the church of Scotland, in the forementioned period; for, in that period, the actual performance of the work of covenanting, was the term of communion in the church of Scotland: But it is too notour to be denied, that the Burghers have entirely laid aſide the ſwearing of the covenants.*' I am very little concerned, whether our terms of communion are the ſame with theſe in the forementioned period, or not; till I ſee a proof, that terms of communion ought to be the ſame in every period and circumſtance of the church: But, I beg leave to inform Mr. H —— n, and the public, that for all his confidence, his argument is no proof that they are different. The church of Scotland, made the *actual performance* of covenanting a term of communion, when they were convinced in their judgment, from the word of God, that they had a *call in providence* to the actual performance of it: But, the Burghers

do not make the *actual performance* of covenanting a term of communion, when they are convinced in their judgment, from the word of God, that they have *not a call* to it in providence. But this is a very lame proof, that their terms are different. Did the church of Scotland, ſtate the *actual performance* of covenanting, as a term of communion, *even in ſuch ſeaſons*, as they were convinced in their judgment, they had *no call* in providence to perform it? Will all the effrontery our Author is maſter of, bear him out to aſſert this! If he cannot, where is his proof? The church of Scotland made *actual covenanting* a term of communion, when they had a call thereto; and when they had not, the maintaining of covenant obligation, and performance of covenant duties: And Mr. H——n's proof is yet to adduce, that this is different from the Burghers terms of communion. It is ſtrange, how perſonal pique, and party fury, blind the eyes, and metamorphoſe an abſurdity into a demonſtration. I leave the reader to judge, whether the downright falſhood is chargeable on Mr. H——n, or his neighbour.

In order to prove, that the actual performance of covenanting was a term of communion, not only in Scotland, but in England alſo, our Author gives us a ſpecimen of his conſummate acquaintance with the hiſtory of theſe times, for their ignorance of which, Seceders are often and ſeverely reprimanded by him. Page 33, '*And by an expreſs order of Lords and* '*Commons, February 2d, 1643. the Solemn League was to be* '*tendered to all men within the pariſhes of England, above the* '*age of eighteen.*' It was ſix months after this date, before the ſolemn league was judicially approven of. The Weſtminſter Aſſembly ſat down, July 1ſt, 1643. The ſolemn league, was firſt approven of by the General Aſſembly of the church of Scotland, Auguſt 17th, 1643. and then ſent up to England, to be received and approven there. It behoved, therefore, to be ſometime after the middle of Auguſt 1643. before the ſolemn league was judicially approven of in England. But is it credible, that the Lords and Commons of England, would enjoin this oath to be tendered unto all, *ſix months before* it had received any judicial approbation, civil or eccleſiaſtic?

It is true, there was ſuch an act paſſed, as Mr. H——n mentions; but, it was on the February after the Aſſembly ſat down, and the ſolemn league judicially agreed unto. And, if Mr. H——n has taken his date from ſome writer at that time, he ought likewiſe to have informed his reader, that they began their year at that time, about the middle, or 24th of March; and conſequently, their February 1643, is the ſame with our February 1644. But, according as he has expreſſed it, the generality of his readers muſt conclude, that the ſolemn league was enjoined, by parliamentary authority, ſix months before it was agreed unto, or had any judicial exiſtence.

He concludes this particular with obſerving, '*If the order and form of fellowſhip obſerved in the firſt Chriſtian church, —were carefully attended unto, a great many of our modern terms of communion, now ſo much in vogue, would ſink into that inſignificance and contempt which they deſerve.*' Here I cordially agree with him: ſuch as, communion between Epiſcopalians, Independents, and mongrel Preſbyterians; which, I apprehend, the reader will probably think the firſt Chriſtian churches knew nothing of.' But theſe are the modern terms ſo much in vogue, that Mr. H——n can *fortell*, and without the ſpirit of prophecy too, that they will carry all before them; and, like the riſing ſun, baniſh the darkneſs of bigotted ſuperſtition. We have his third poſition, p. 34.

3. '*None have a right, in the ſight of God, to the ſeal of his covenant, in the holy ſupper, but thoſe who are brought within the bond of the covenant.*' I have no occaſion to inſiſt on this; for Mr. H——n certainly knows, that Seceders maintain this as well as himſelf: and that this, like the former, is no branch of the difference between the Seceſſion and the Relief. The reader will obſerve then, that when three particulars are diſcuſſed, he is not yet entered upon the proper buſineſs of this part of his performance. His fourth poſition is ſtated, p. 37.

4.—'*It is the viſibility of ſaintſhip before the world, that entitles men to communion in the eye of the church.*' It is a very natural enquiry here, when came the WORLD to be conſtituted not only judges of the viſibility of *ſaintſhip*; but their judgment to be the CHURCH's rule of procedure, in admitting to ſealing ordinances? It is the ſaying of the Saviour indeed, *All*

men ſhall know that ye are my diſciples. But there is ſome difference between knowing that men are Chriſtians by profeſſion; and judging of viſible ſaintſhip. The Saviour warns his diſciples, not to marvel if the *world* hated them; and his apoſtle declares, the world *knoweth* us not; and how then can the church proceed on the world's judgment? She is certainly to be directed by her own judgment, taking the unerring word for her rule; and not by the judgment of the world. But ſuppoſing he means ſaintſhip in the eye of the church, I have no occaſion to inſiſt on it; as he ſeldom comes nigh the point in hand, except in ſome bitter reflection, or ſelf-conceited egomet. For, after all his copious handling of this particular, in which we have a number of agreeable truths, the queſtion ſtill returns, may not theſe who are viſible ſaints act ſuch a part, that they ought to be excluded from ſealing ordinances? And therefore, when this particular is finiſhed, we are juſt where we began. In p. 38. he aſſerts,

'*No good reaſon can be aſſigned, why they ſhould be excluded from the Lord's table, for the imperfection of their knowledge, any more than of their holineſs.*' I have anſwered this already, Sect. II. The Relief terms of communion extend not only to imperfections in knowledge, which is the caſe with every Chriſtian while in this world; but unto imperfections *approven of*, and *perſiſted in*, in oppoſition unto the truth ſet before them: and if imperfections in holineſs, of this ſort, will not exclude from ſealing ordinances, Mr. H——n may conſider what it is which can do ſo. He adds, p. 41.

'*But perhaps ſome will have the aſſurance to tell the world, as the author of the Relief ſcheme conſidered has done, that when Paul mentions the* FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT, *in chap. vth of his epiſtle to the Galatians, his words have no relation to the article of communion at all.*' In this chapter the apoſtle ſets before us, a variety of the different fruits of the fleſh and of the Spirit; by which Chriſtians ought to conduct themſelves in the duty of ſelf-examination, whether in the views of ſealing ordinances or not. But I confeſs, that the author of the *Relief ſcheme conſidered*, aſſerting that this is not ſtating terms of communion, did not appear to me an evidence of any uncommon aſſurance. Nor could I have expected that Mr. H—n would urge it as an argument, that this paſſage is uſually read

immediately before communicating; as I apprehend he is not certain, but this practice, like many other modern things, had no exiſtence for many years after the apoſtles days. Our Author, however, has opened a new field to us; namely, that whenever we find the character of the godly delineated in the word of God, there we have terms of communion ſtated. Accordingly, the fifth of Matthew is the Saviour's plan of communion;—the fifth of the Galatians, Paul's plan;—*To viſit the fatherleſs and widows, and keep unſpotted from the world*, the plan adopted by the apoſtle James;—and *neither to add unto*, nor *take away from the word of God*, is the apoſtle John's plan of communion.——The reader will perhaps conſider this as ſomething new, and which requires ſome degree of aſſurance.

But he is reſolved, p. 42. to make Chriſtians *feel* the force of his argument, that the *fruits of the Spirit* entitle men to ſealing ordinances in the ſight of God, and in the eye of the church. 'If *the fruits of the Spirit are poſſeſſed by any in their 'hearts, and exhibited in their lives, have not ſuch perſons a 'title to the Lord's table, both in the ſight of God, and by the 'rule of the church? Moſt certainly: They err, not knowing 'the ſcriptures, who will venture to deny it.*' But are prelacy and independency fruits of the Spirit? For, according to Relief terms of communion, theſe who maintain ſuch principles are *moſt certainly* to be admitted. I aſk further, how does our Author know the fruits of the Spirit, poſſeſſed in the heart, as he talks? The anſwer, no doubt is, when they are exhibited in the life. But I aſk again, have not the lives of *ſome* Arians, Socinians, and Deiſts, been as like the fruits of the Spirit, as the lives of many real Chriſtians? According to our Author's reaſoning, they are *moſt certainly* to be admitted to ſealing ordinances. I hope there are a number of Chriſtians, who will not *eaſily feel the force* of his argument. It is evident there muſt be goſpel principles, as well as a regular practice, to entitle men to ſealing ordinances. And till our Author has evinced, that it is only denying of, or erring in eſſentials, which excludes from communion, (a taſk he has yet to perform), all his numerous pages, and ſtrong aſſertions on this particular, are a mere beating the air. They muſt be ignorant Chriſtians, who cannot ſee this at firſt glance; and I ſhall therefore take no further notice of them.

He tells us, p. 47. that our plan of communion, 'has an 'eſſential inbred tendency to make us fly off from one another in 'disjointed ſplinters.' I anſwer, if the Relief plan of communion ſecures them againſt flying off like disjointed ſplinters, it is becauſe it does not bring them into any nearer connexion than ſplinters accidentally, or caſually heaped together. Nor has even this ſecured them againſt a disjointed ſplinter flying off at a time.

On this particular alſo, p. 48. we have chap. xxvi. ſect. 2. of the Weſtminſter Confeſſion introduced; 'Saints, by pro-'feſſion, are bound to maintain an HOLY fellowſhip in the 'worſhip of God, &c.' It appears a little ſtrange to me, that the Relief ſynod ſhould pretend, that this paſſage ſupports, or countenances their plan of communion. Mr. H——n owns, that the laſt branch of the Section reſpects *works of charity*, and is therefore out of the queſtion.

On the firſt clauſe I obſerve, that *granting* the aſſembly intended to fix terms of communion (which I apprehend they did not): but allowing it for a little, it does not follow, that they intended to fix terms of communion, for the ſhattered and disjointed ſituation of the church, at the compiling of this article. Mr. H——n can bear witneſs, as well as any man living, that it was uniformity in doctrine, worſhip, diſcipline, and government, in the three united kingdoms, which they were particularly intent upon. And therefore, all that follows from, granting that this Section reſpects admiſſion to ſealing ordinances, is only this, that *even* in that *united* and harmonizing ſtate of the church, her fellowſhip ought to be HOLY. —In a word, that they do not ſtate terms of communion between Preſbyterians, Epiſcopalians, and Independents, &c. or between the church in Britain and Geneva; but for the church in the three united kingdoms, harmoniziug in doctrine, worſhip, diſcipline, and government; and maintain, that *even* in ſuch a ſituation, her communion was to be holy; or to uſe every ſcriptural method to exclude the unholy from her communion. And whether this makes any thing for the Relief terms of communion, or againſt the Seceſſion, is ſubmitted.

But I demand a proof, that terms of admiſſion to ſealing ordinances are at all intended in this Section. I obſerve,

1. It appears quite evident to me, that the meaning of it is juſt this, That it is the duty of profeſſed Chriſtians, to make conſcience of all the branches of God's worſhip; and every religious exerciſe and duty which he has appointed, and in that ſpiritual and holy manner, which his word requires. They ſtate the Chriſtan's unqueſtionable duty, to be conſcientious in applying to every religious ordinance and exerciſe in general; but not the leaſt appearance of ſtating terms of *admiſſion* to ſealing ordinances in particular. I appeal to any unprejudiced perſon, if this is not the plain ſenſe of the words at firſt ſight; and who denies this? But it is foreign enough from ſtating terms of admiſſion to ſealing ordinances.

2. I obſerve, that the ſcriptures annexed abundantly ſupport this ſenſe of the words. Heb. x. 24, 25. *Let us conſider one another, to provoke unto love and to good works. Not forſaking the aſſembling of ourſelves together, as the manner of ſome is*, &c. This is evidently an expreſs injunction to make conſcience of God's ordinances, but not very like ſtating terms of communion. Acts ii. 42. *And they continued ſtedfaſtly in the apoſtles doctrine and fellowſhip*, &c. This ſets before us the example of the primitive Chriſtians, in their regular attendance upon all the ordinances of divine appointment, which is of equal force on us with an expreſs precept to attend regularly on ordinances; but has little appearance of fixing terms of communion. Iſa. ii. 3. is evidently an Old Teſtament prediction of the very ſame thing, in New Teſtament times. It is true, 1 Cor. xi. 20. *When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's ſupper*, may be conſidered as a reproof, for the diſorderly manner in which they attended upon ſolemn ordinances. But it is as evidently a reproof for neglecting that ordinance. Divines ſeem generally to allow, that it is their *exceſs* at their feaſts of charity, for which the apoſtle here reprimands them. At that time (it is generally allowed) they had what they called a *feaſt of charity*, or *ante-ſupper*; perhaps introduced by Jewiſh Chriſtians, as ſome ſort of imitation of our Saviour's obſerving the paſſover, immediately before he inſtituted the ſacrament of the ſupper. And as this was no part of their divine ſervice, they frequently uſed ſuch freedoms as rendered them quite unfit for attending on the ſolemn ſervice, which the apoſtle mentions, ver. 21. *One is*

drunken; and probably numbers of them did not obſerve it: Accordingly the apoſtle tells them, it was not to eat of the Lord's ſupper, for many of them neglected it. And, therefore, underſtanding this text, as correſponding with other texts annexed to this article of our Confeſſion, it is juſt a reproof for *neglecting* ſolemn ordinances, which can never amount to a ſtating terms of communion.—It is evident then, from the ſcriptures ſubjoined, that this article juſt imports, that it is the indiſpenſible duty of Chriſtians to attend on all God's ordinances, in that ſpiritual and holy manner which he has required in his word. Is it credible, that they would fix their terms of communion in the ſingle epithet, HOLY, without annexing a ſingle ſcripture which has the leaſt appearance of ſupporting this term of communion?

To corroberate this, I deſire the reader to conſult, chap. xxix. ſect. viii. where it is declared, that both the *ignorant* and *ungodly* are to be excluded from ſolemn ordinances, and he will find a number of pertinent texts of ſcripture annexed in ſupport of it. Now, I appeal to any man of common ſenſe, if he can ſuppoſe, that they would ſtate *holineſs* as the univerſal term of communion, without annexing ſome ſuch ſcriptures as are ſubjoined, chap. xxix. ſect. viii. or any other which has the leaſt appearance of countenancing what they intended to eſtabliſh?

3. I obſerve, that I cannot perſuade myſelf, that they would determine ſuch an important point, as the terms of admiſſion to ſealing ordinances; and huddle it up in a ſingle epithet, HOLY, without giving the remoteſt hint, that they intended to fix the terms of church fellowſhip, or annexing a ſingle ſcripture to direct us to this ſenſe of the paſſage.

Mr. H——n ſeems to be ſenſible of this, and aſſigns it as the *reaſon* why they made choice of ſcriptures expreſſing the duty of communion in *general* and *indefinite* terms; namely, that *neither Preſbyterians nor Independents might think themſelves excluded.* But who is ſo blind as not to ſee, that this would only have led them to avoid any ſcriptures reſpecting church-government and diſcipline? For, in other reſpects, they might be as particular as they pleaſed, without excluding Independents. So that this is a mere *blind* to an ignorant reader.

4. I obſerve, that if they fix the terms of admiſſion in this article, then, the terms of admiſſion to ſealing ordinances, preaching, praying, praiſing, Chriſtian converſe, yea, works of charity, are all the ſame; for the epithet *holy* is equally applicable unto all the particulars contained in this ſection. It is very obvious, that they ought all of them to be performed in an *holy* manner; but, it is as evident, that the terms on which we are to admit to ſealing ordinances, and other religious ſervices, are very different: A plain evidence, that this ſection only ſets forth the *duty* of Chriſtians, and the *manner* in which all theſe religious ſervices in general ought to be performed; but does not fix the *terms* of admiſſion to ſealing ordinances in particular. Beſides, did our anceſtors imagine, that there was not an *holy* Epiſcopalian? And will it believe for any one, who is acquainted with the tranſactions of theſe times, that they purpoſely framed terms of communion to receive Epiſcopalians into their boſom?

It is true, and Mr. H——n ought to remember it, that the Relief miniſters, in explaining their ſynodical ſentence for holding communion with Epiſcopalians aſſert; that their meaning is fully ſet forth in this article of our Confeſſion. Mr. H——n makes a handle of Independents being members of the Aſſembly; but, he will not plead this in favour of Epiſcopalians. Now, I might aſk the ſynod of Relief, did they really apprehend this to be the caſe? Or, did they imagine any man would believe them, that our godly anceſtors would ſolemnly ſwear to root out Prelacy in all its branches, and at the ſame time, while there was not an Epiſcopalian either aſking, or deſiring communion with them, would purpoſely frame an article of their Confeſſion, to receive abjured Prelacy into their boſom? The credulous Jew may believe it.

From theſe obſervations, it is clear as ſun-ſhine, that this ſection of our Confeſſion juſt imports, that it is the duty of Chriſtians to make conſcience of all the branches of God's worſhip, and every other religious ſervice, and in that holy manner which he has required in his word: It is the obvious meaning of the words at firſt view, and any other ſenſe of them is attended with unavoidable abſurdities. The Relief church, therefore, taking hold of this ſection, for countenancing their terms of communion, is like a drowning man taking hold of weeds, or

wreck: For, after all the noiſe they have made concerning it, they cannot prove, that terms of communion are ſtated, or intended.

But, in order to preſs this ſection into the ſervice of Relief terms of communion, our Author offers ſome ſhort obſervations, page 43.

1. '*That the Weſtminſter Aſſembly, that compiled the Confeſſion, was compoſed of Independants, as well as Preſbyterians; and, I can entertain no doubt, that they conſidered one another as ſaints by profeſſion.*' Our Author muſt know, that it is one thing to conſider one another as *ſaints* by profeſſion,—another to lay it down as an article of their Confeſſion, that ſaints, by profeſſion, ought to maintain an *holy fellowſhip* in all the branches of God's worſhip, and religious duties which he has required;—and it is a third, very different from both, to ſtate the *terms* on which they are to maintain this fellowſhip. And, I am certain, their ſitting in one Aſſembly, in virtue of parliamentary authority, in a diſtracted ſtate of the church, will never prove, that they intended to hold communion with one another, on the ſingle conſideration of their being ſaints by profeſſion.

2. '*As both parties were active in framing this article, on the head of communion, they ſeem purpoſely to have expreſſed their ſentiments, in general terms, that none of the parties might think themſelves excluded, and thereby be irritated at the other.*' Here again, our Author diſcovers but very little acquaintance with the tranſactions of theſe times, in affirming, that Independants were *active* in framing this article. Before the framing of this article, the Independants, being quite diſguſted, becauſe matters were carried againſt them, reſpecting the *form* of church-government; gave themſelves very little concern with the buſineſs of the Aſſembly. Accordingly we are told, that they abſented themſelves for ſeveral weeks at a time; and when preſent were active in nothing, except in oppoſing every thing the Aſſembly were about to determine.

Their party, without doors, was making raped progreſs; their number encreaſing daily. Their friends in parliament were plotting, and with conſiderable ſucceſs, to ſecure the army on their ſide; by turning out the officers of the Preſbyterian

perſuaſion, and filling their places with ſuch as favoured their own ſentiments. Cromwell, their great patron, threatened he would draw his ſword in their cauſe. Encouraged by theſe things, the Independants in the Aſſembly, ſeem to have made it their great aim to embarraſs the court, and retard them in their work, that they might gain time to ſtrengthen their party, and obtain, by the power of the army, what they could not ſupport by argument in the Aſſembly. Beſides, the Independants do not ſeem to have intended communion with the Preſbyterians; they were reſolved to have ſeparate congregations by themſelves, and inſiſted for toleration, not only to themſelves, but to the other ſectaries; and at laſt declared, they would rather ſuffer, or go to ſome other place of the world, than ſubmit to Preſbytery. See Bailie's letters, and Neil's hiſtory of the Puritans;—the former of theſe informs us, that even by the time the Aſſembly had ſat one year, the Independants did all that lay in their power, to oppoſe the Aſſembly in every thing. And, before this article was framed, they not only *oppoſed*, but rather *inſulted* the Aſſembly; perhaps, relying on their encreaſing power without doors, particularly in the army. After the Aſſembly had waited ſeven months, for the Independants to give in their model of church-government, Mr. Bailie tells us, 'They have ſcorned us; they gave us in a ſheet or 'two of injurious reaſons, why they would not give us any 'reaſons of their tenets.' If theſe things are conſidered, how groundleſs is our Author's ſuppoſition, that the Independants were equally *active* with the Preſbyterians in framing this article, to include themſelves, while it is evident, they wanted no communion with them? And Mr. Bailie informs us, that they always *ſcorned* reaſonable terms of accommodation. It would be no loſs to our Author, more than Seceders, to be rather better acquainted with the tranſactions of theſe times.

3. '*It is evident, that the venerable Weſtminſter Aſſembly, 'who framed this article of the Confeſſion, never meant, that, 'in order to conſtitute men ſaints by profeſſion, they behoved to 'know and profeſs every truth in the word of God.*' But, you ought to remember, Sir, that the queſtion is not, what is *requiſite* to conſtitute one a ſaint by profeſſion, but what are the *terms* on which ſaints by profeſſion, are to maintain full communion with one another? And you can give no evidence,

that this ſection determines either what is requiſite to conſtitute one a ſaint by profeſſion, or what are the terms on which they ought to join together in ſealing ordinances. Here you have adduced an evident proof, or at leaſt a very ſtrong preſumption, againſt your own ſenſe of the ſection. I appeal to any unprejudiced perſon, if he can entertain ſuch a notion of that venerable Aſſembly, as that they would fix *ſaintſhip by profeſſion*, to be the *comprehenſive* term of communion, without giving the remoteſt hint, what is requiſite to conſtitute one *a ſaint by profeſſion*. This was to leave the matter, juſt as they found it. All that our Author has advanced, is not the ſhadow of proof, that terms of communion are here intended. In page 39. he enters upon his fifth particular.

5. '—*Though the viſibility of ſaintſhip entitles men to communion, according to the rule of the church; yet, when men who have formerly been admitted to communion, on account of a competency of knowledge, and the external purity of their deportment, fall into open and viſible violations of the divine law, they are to be excluded by the office-bearers of the church, from communion with her in ſealing ordinances, till they make a ſolemn public profeſſion of repentance, and be rebuked before all as the apoſtle directs.*'

He has fully ſhown, on his former particular, and at great length, that the *viſibility of ſaintſhip alone*, entitles men to communion in the eye of the church, and has a great number of juſt and edifying obſervations, though very wide off the point he means to eſtabliſh. There is no law againſt theſe who appear to be poſſeſſed of the fruits of the Spirit, with many ſuch obſervations; although there are doctrines of men excluding them from any part in the blood of Chriſt *. On this particular, he proceeds to overturn, at once, all his elaborate argumentation on the former; unleſs he maintain, that nothing can exclude a man from ſealing ordinances, which does not diveſt him of viſible ſaintſhip, in the judgment of charity. But he ſeems to be exceedingly deſtitute of ideas on this particular, and hath little to ſay, till he turn his artillery againſt the Seceders; and then his tongue is looſed as uſual, and his neighbouring clergyman gets a hearty drubbing.

* Diſcourſe on church-fellowſhip.

He tells us, in a former note, that his neighbour diſcovered *admirable wiſdom*, as well as *regard to truth*, in confuting his diſcourſe on the vague report of his hearers. Here Mr. H—n diſcovers the ſame *admirable wiſdom*, and *regard to truth*, in belabouring his neighbour, becauſe he aſſerted (as Mr. H——n was CREDIBLY INFORMED, by the *vague report of his hearers*, no doubt) that viſible ſaints may act ſuch a part, that they may juſtly be excluded from ſealing ordinances. Mr. H——n's information is all *credible*, his neighbour's only *vague report*.

And here we have a notable collection of Mr. H——n's uſual and unanſwerable arguments. *Weak*, *falſe*, *invidious*, *ignorant*, *imprudent*, *oſtentatious*, *deſcanting flouriſh*, *weak* and *trifling* objectors! All theſe in three ſentences, and in *Italics* too, leſt ſome of his readers perchance, ſhould not enter preciſely into his feelings, and perſonal pique at his neighbour; and conſequently the *ſterling ſolidity* of theſe arguments paſs unobſerved. I know no man who would wiſh to diſgrace himſelf by encountering Mr. H——n at this kind of argumentation. He pronounces his neighbour ignorant of the Relief plan of communion; and he can ſuſtain no great loſs although it were true: but Mr. H——n ſeems to be a little fretted, that his neighbour underſtands ſo much of it. And whatever my opponent may think neceſſary to tell weak and trifling objectors, concerning the reality of ſaintſhip continuing, when the viſibility of it is gone; he muſt be told that the viſibility of ſaintſhip, in the judgment of charity, may continue when a preſent right to ſealing ordinances is gone. To make this obvious, I obſerve,

1. That Mr. H——n's clear proof, that *viſible ſaintſhip alone*, entitles men to communion, is utterly inconcluſive, unleſs every thing which excludes a man from ſealing ordinances, diveſt him of viſible ſaintſhip alſo. If nothing more but *viſible ſaintſhip*, in the judgment of charity, is requiſite to conſtitute a man's right to ſealing ordinances; it is plain he cannot be excluded, till he is diveſted of it in the judgment of charity.—Now, ſuppoſe an *umbrage* takes place between two of his *viſible ſaints*, does this at once ſtrip them of *viſible ſaintſhip?* I apprehend, he will not aſſert that it does. If he obſerve the ſcripture rule, however, they are not to be admitted, till they are reconciled. *Leave thy gift before the altar*, &c. Matth.

v. 24. It is evident, to a demonſtration then, that men may be excluded from ſealing ordinances, while they are not cut off from viſible ſaintſhip, in the judgment of charity. Was it then weak and ignorant for his neighbour to aſſert this? Or, is it weak and ignorant to deny it?

2. Profeſſors may act ſuch a part, that an *acknowledgment* of their offence practically or explicitly is neceſſary; yea, *profeſſion* of their ſorrow, with *admonition* or *rebuke*, while they are not diveſted of viſible ſaintſhip. I apprehend, that few will aſſert, that men are to be ſtruck off from the liſt of viſible ſaints, whenever they render acknowledgment, profeſſion of ſorrow, admonition, or rebuke neceſſary; and as few will aſſert, that in ſuch a caſe, they ought to be admitted till it is done. I hope to make it evident, that not only individuals, but whole ſocieties of Chriſtians, may act ſuch a part, that an acknowledgment of their offence, directly or indirectly, may be neceſſary, while they remain viſible ſaints in the judgment of charity. Something elſe then, beſides viſible ſaintſhip, is requiſite to entitle men to ſealing ordinances.

3. It is generally allowed, that while perſons are liable to *church cenſure*, they ought to be excluded from ſealing ordinances, till cenſure is inflicted. Mr. H——n muſt therefore maintain, that all the cenſures of the church, even the *very loweſt*, are declarative that the perſon's ſtate is bad in the eye of the church, and in the judgment of charity: for if this is not the caſe, he is not cut off from viſible ſaintſhip: and therefore, according to the Relief terms of communion, he cannot be excluded. But Mr. H——n allows, that when perſons are liable to cenſure, they ought to be excluded till it is inflicted; but he does not alledge, that any cenſure is declarative that the ſtate is bad in the eye of the church, or that the man is ſtript of viſible ſaintſhip, except by the greater excommunication; and that when it is removed, his viſible ſaintſhip returns. This is juſt an explicit acknowledgment, that although a viſible ſaint may render himſelf liable to leſſer cenſure, *profeſſion* of ſorrow and *rebuke*, for which he is to be excluded from ſealing ordinances, his viſible ſaintſhip continues; in other words, that viſible ſaints may be excluded, when liable to cenſure, but only caſting them out of the church ſtrips them of viſible ſaintſhip: but it is *weak*, *falſe*, and *invidious*, &c. for his neighbour to aſſert this.

4. Mr. H——n aſſerting, on his former particular, that ALL *viſible ſaints* are to be admitted; on this particular, that theſe who are liable to *cenſure* are to be excluded, is a downright contradiction. Setting Chriſtianity aſide, it is well known, that it is not a few acts, *virtuous* or *vicious*, upon which we form our judgment of a man's character as *good* or *bad*; but on the general tenor of his behaviour. In like manner, it is not a few acts, apparently *religious* or *irreligious*, which conſtitute a man a viſible *ſaint* or *ſinner*, in the eye of the church; but the general tenor of his deportment. I appeal to any man, if this is not the caſe. Now, ſuppoſe a man who has maintained a *blameleſs religious character*, for twenty or thirty years, is overtaken in an act or two of open irregularity, will this at once deſtroy his former religious character? How uncharitable! at once to ſtrike him off from the liſt of viſible ſaints, and rank him among Satan's herd, or even to reckon his character ſuſpicious. Would not every Chriſtian rather be grieved, that a godly man was overtaken in ſuch irregularity, as to wound religion, and open the mouths of the profane? An act or two of irregularity then, does not deſtroy the man's religious character; it is only irregularity, exceedingly groſs in its nature, or perſiſted in, ſo as to overbalance his former agreeable deportment, which can diveſt him of viſible ſaintſhip. But every one knows, that an act or two of open irregularity, although it does not diveſt of apparent ſaintſhip, in the judgment of charity; does frequently expoſe to cenſure, and excluſion for a time from ſealing ordinances. Here then a viſible ſaint excluded from ſealing ordinances. Mr. H——n tacitely acknowledges this at leaſt; and, I make no doubt, but he has practiſed it: But, it is *falſe* and *invidious* in his neighbour to aſſert it. Here, however, we ſee a viſible ſaint guilty of irregularities; and, according to Mr. H——n's former particular, he muſt admit him; for he is ſtill a *child* in the eye of the church, in the judgment of charity, and he dare not refuſe him the *children's* bread: But, according to this particular, he muſt exclude and cenſure him as a delinquent. It is very evident, that profeſſors may be overtaken in ſuch irregularities, as render them liable to cenſure, and excluſion from ſealing ordinances, without being diveſted of a religious character in the judgment of charity; for, an act or two cannot alter a

general character, according to Mr. H——n's fourth particular, he muſt admit them as viſible ſaints; but more juſtly according to his fifth particular, he is to exclude them as viſible ſaints, overtaken in irregularity: ſo that his fourth and fifth particulars mutually deſtroy one another; and his neighbouring clergyman not ſo ignorant of the Relief plan, as he would make the world believe.

5. Mr. H——n muſt allow, that viſible ſaints may be excluded from ſealing ordinances; or he muſt maintain, that no *immorality* can exclude a man from communion, if it is not inconſiſtent with a ſtate of grace. He will readily allow, that no doctrinal errors can exclude a man, but ſuch as are inconſiſtent with grace, or erring in eſſentials: But pretends to be very punctual with reſpect to immorality in the practice; but, it is directly oppoſite to his terms of communion. I maintain, that according to his plan of communion, he cannot exclude from ſealing ordinances, and conſequently cannot exerciſe diſcipline, for any irregularities in the practice, except theſe which are inconſiſtent with a ſtate of grace; either ſo groſs in their nature, or ſo habitually perſiſted in as to ſtrip the man of a religious character. But, irregularities may frequently take place in the lives of profeſſors, which render them liable to diſcipline, and excluſion from ſealing ordinances: Mr. H—n can do neither, unleſs they are ſuch irregularities as are inconſiſtent with grace. Perhaps he may refuſe this. But, I aſk, if a perſon is guilty of nothing in his practice, inconſiſtent with a ſtate of grace, what right has Mr. H——n, or any man, to ſtrike him off from the liſt of viſible ſaints? *Charity thinketh no evil.* And, if he is a viſible ſaint, he cannot exclude him; for all ſuch are to be admitted: And, if he cannot exclude him, he cannot cenſure him; unleſs a man may have a right to ſealing ordinances in the eye of the church, and be liable to cenſure at the ſame time. Mr. H——n's terms of communion will evidently admit perſons liable to cenſure; here he declares, that ſuch are to be excluded: how to reconcile theſe, I know not.

I hope, that Mr. H——n is as punctual, as he alledges, in excluding from ſealing ordinances, and exerciſing other branches of diſcipline, on account of irregularities in the practice, al-

though it is a plain evidence, that viſible ſaints may be excluded. Perhaps, the principal difference is, with reſpect to *doctrinal errors*, as Mr. H——n, I hope, will not admit the *immoral*. *We* maintain, that doctrinal errors may deſerve cenſure, and conſequently excluſion from ſealing ordinances, although the man do not err in eſſentials, or eſpouſe damnable hereſy: Mr. H——n maintains, they do not. We are, however, well nigh agreed, when he allows, in page 10. of his animadverſions, that '*an error in the head, is a ſcandal in the ſight of God.*' And, therefore, if it is avowed, it ought to be a ſcandal in the eye of the church, and exclude from ſealing ordinances, unleſs the church muſt admit the ſcandalous. In page 51, he proceeds to his ſixth poſition.

6. '*I obſerve, that perfect unanimity in every thing, is not* '*neceſſary to Chriſtian fellowſhip.*' I have no quarrel with him here. Men may and will have their particular noſtrums; and if they ſatisfy themſelves with them, as their own private ſentiment, without teaching, or troubling the church with them, I know no reaſon why they ſhould be excluded.

But having eſtabliſhed unanimity in ſentiment unneceſſary, he proceeds, page 52. to anſwer an objection of Seceders to Relief terms of communion, concerning *eſſential* or *fundamental truths*; namely, that their terms of communion are quite *vague* or *undetermined*, unleſs they would enumerate what truths are eſſential, and what truths, as he expreſſes himſelf, are *only uſeful in their own place*, but not eſſential to ſalvation. This he endeavours to anſwer in the way of retorting, or turning the Seceders argument againſt themſelves. Accordingly he ſets out, giving his reader abundant reaſon to expect, that he will, at once, prove the Seceſſion terms of communion to be quite vague and undetermined. And it is amaſing to ſee how he flouriſhes away for a little, telling us, if the Seceders mean this or that, their terms of communion are quite undetermined: Although he very well knew, they mean no ſuch thing. But, as ſoon as he mentions what the Author of the *Relief ſcheme conſidered* had told him, were the Seceſſion terms of communion, with reſpect to doctrinal truths, he finds himſelf quite unable to make good his aſſertion, that they are vague; and, therefore, notwithſtanding of all the confidence with which he ſet out, he is obliged at once to ſhift his ground, and

ſheer off, with telling his reader, they are *unſcriptural*. And after he has attempted to prove, I ſhould rather ſay, after he has confidently *aſſerted*, that they are unſcriptural; he leaves his reader to conclude, that he has proved them vague and undetermined. But, ſurely our brother ought to remember, that there is a very wide difference betwixt a thing being *unſcriptural*, and being *vague* or *uncertain*. If I prove *theft* or *calumny* to be *unſcriptural*, are they therefore *vague* and *uncertain?* But our Author has aſſerted, that Seceſſion terms of communion are not *ſcriptural;* and then leaves his reader to conclude, that they are uncertain. This is excellent reaſoning, to propoſe to prove that a thing is vague; and conclude, with aſſerting, that it is not ſcriptural: Men of judgment and diſcernment will certainly approve of the accuracy of it. It proves one thing clearly, that Mr. H——n is unable to evince, that our terms of communion are vague or uncertain. He frequently charges us, with being ignorant of Relief terms of communion; and for myſelf, I can freely own, that the charge is in ſome meaſure juſt; for, I cannot pretend to ſay poſitively what is the meaning of holding by ESSENTIALS ONLY, as terms of communion. It appears to me to be this: I will hold as few of the truths revealed in the word of God, as I can poſſibly think is conſiſtent with reaching heaven at laſt: However, much other truths may be connected with the glory of God, with the Redeemer's honour, if I may get to heaven without them, I will pay no regard to them as terms of communion. Accordingly, a man applies to me for admiſſion on theſe terms; but neither of us have determined what theſe *eſſentials* are, and therefore, muſt make very looſe work of it.—Till the Relief, as a body, give ſome account of their eſſentials, their terms of communion muſt continue vague and uncertain.

The Author of the Relief ſcheme conſidered, had inſinuated, that although he could not approve of a promiſcuous admiſſion, he had no objection to Chriſtians of different denominations, enjoying ſealing ordinances among themſelves. Mr. H——n compares this, page 55. to the *elder* children of a family telling the *younger*, in a haughty and imperious manner, that they may take a by-board for themſelves, but ſhall not ſit with them. This is indeed an argument for children. And, by

the by, if it is applied to Seceders, it is quite inverted. They only tell these who dun the world so much with their *saintship*, and being *children*, that as they maintain a variety of particulars, which Seceders cannot countenance them in, they will rather take a little by-board to themselves, although with much contempt and scorn, and allow the Relief to enjoy all that ease, prosperity, increase, and applause, which they are so confident of.

Our Author next proceeds, p. 56. to give a *clear* proof of his terms of communion from the word of God. And Rom. xiv. from the first to the sixth verse inclusive, is fixed upon; and we have a short paraphrase, and such observations subjoined, as I am certain it is not easy for some to read with gravity; and then Seceders are dislodged from every lurking place. One would naturally have expected, that when this passage was to be the *only* foundation of such a huge fabric, that every assertion concerning it, or deduction from it, would be exceedingly well supported. But instead of this, (I must not take time to mention all the particulars, which he takes for granted, without so much as offering a proof,) he does not give us any proof that this passage respects sealing ordinances, as he asserts. The first clause, *Him that is weak in the faith receive you*, may be considered in this view, although as good a divine as Mr. H——n alledges it may mean, to receive them into their *company*, and private religious conversation. And this is the more likely, as it is not an address unto the office-bearers in the church of Rome, who had the charge of admitting unto, and excluding from sealing ordinances. If it were an address to office-bearers, all exercise of discipline is plainly prohibited; they are not to judge another man's servant whether he stand or fall. And through the whole of the chapter, it is evident, the apostle has a view unto their *private* judging, and harsh unchristian-like censuring of one another. I know no better specimen of what the apostle reproves, than Mr. H——n's Appendix. It would not have been superfluous, to have given us a proof that admission to sealing ordinances is intended. He likewise takes it for granted, that *doubtful disputation*, and *controverted points*, are expressions of the same import; by paraphrasing the words *doubtful disputations*, the point or points *presently controverted*. A point of doubtful

diſputation, is a thing which is not clearly revealed in the word of God; which was the caſe at this time with reſpect to the Jews either uſing, or refraining from ſome of their ceremonial rites. But, are doubtful diſputations, and controverted points, ſimilar expreſſions? The ſupreme Deity of the Son of God has many times been the preſently controverted point; I hope it is not a mere doubtful diſputation.—He likewiſe takes it for granted, that the Jewiſh Chriſtians intended to introduce theſe ceremonies into the public worſhip of God. But the obſerving of, or refraining from divers kinds of *food*, could not be introduced into public worſhip; and the apoſtle ſeems to mention the obſervation of *days*, rather as practiſed by individuals, *One man eſteemeth one day above another*, namely, in his judgment and practiſe as an individual. He gives us no proof that they even intended to bring their ceremonies into the public worſhip of God. He likewiſe aſſerts, but does not prove, p. 63. that Paul '*was for admitting the Chriſtian Jews to ſealing ordinances, in his day, though they did not receive his own received principle.*' By *his own received principle* he means, the Chriſtian church being free from the burdenſome yoke of Jewiſh ceremonies. But when had the apoſtle, before now, declared his received principle concerning this matter, to theſe Chriſtians at Rome? If he never had declared this received principle to them till now, and they may prove that he had, who will; who informed Mr. H——n that theſe Jewiſh Chriſtians did not receive the apoſtle's received principle? It was the received principle of the apoſtle, that the Chriſtian church was ſet free from the yoke of Jewiſh ceremonies; but that the points diſputed in this church were for the time preſent indifferent. And when the apoſtle had ſo largely and particularly laid his principles, on this particular before them, he had certainly every reaſon to expect that it would prevail with both parties, to view it in that light in which he had ſet it before them by the Spirit of inſpiration. And it is highly probable it did ſo; Mr. H——n aſſerts the contrary; and then drops a tear of pity for poor Seceders, becauſe they are not diſpoſed to credit ſuch aſſertions without a proof.—The Reader may ſee a variety of particulars of this ſort in Mr. Ramſay's Review.

But as this portion of ſcripture is the foundation on which Mr. H——n reſts his terms of communion, the Reader will

allow me to ſhow, in as few words as I can, what appears to me to be the meaning of it; and what every commentator, I have conſulted, takes notice of; and then to ſhow what is the native conſequence reſpecting Relief terms of communion.

1. It appears evident to me, that in this paſſage the apoſtle ſpeaks of matters of *doubtful diſputation.* This every one muſt be convinced of by a ſingle glance at the firſt verſe, unleſs he is diſpoſed to ſubſtitute Mr. H——n's *controverted point*, in the place of the apoſtle's *doubtful diſputation.*

2. It is equally evident, that he ſpeaks of matters of mere *indifference*, for the time preſent: *Let every man be fully perſuaded in his own mind*, ver. 2. But if the thing was undoubtedly ſinful in itſelf, as Mr. H——n maintains it was, can ever a man's perſuaſion, or conviction, change the nature of things, and render it *lawful* for him to do that which is *ſinful?* But when the apoſtle ſays, *Let every man be fully perſuaded in his own mind*, it is juſt, in other words, Let him not act againſt his own judgment and conſcience, which is certainly ſinful; and then let him do, or not as he pleaſes. This, I apprehend, is juſt the grand diſtinguiſhing feature of a thing indifferent; that which a man may do or not, as he pleaſes, if he act not contrary to his own conſcience.—It was ſcarcely practicable for the apoſtle, in fewer words, to give a more clear and pointed deſcription of a thing indifferent, that which a man may do or not, providing he act not contrary to his own light. And altho' the apoſtle declares, in a very ſolemn manner, ver. 14. that nothing is *unclean in itſelf*, it is very plainly implied, ver. 15. that if a *weak brother was offended*, it was right to refrain; plainly importing, that although it was lawful, it was indifferent. Accordingly, divines of eſtabliſhed character have frequently ſaid, that theſe ceremonies, being for ſuch a continuance of time, an ordinance of God, they were allowed, for a while, to be conſidered as indifferent; that they were to have a decent funeral; were for a time dead, but not deadly. Nor was there any poſitive precept, as yet, declaring them to be ſinful: and ſome have been of opinion, that their total abolition was not to take place, till God in his providence had deſtroyed their city and temple. And if they had been abſolutely unlawful, can we poſſibly think that all the apoſtles would have been ſilent; yea, approved, and themſelves prac-

tiſed, as we may ſee afterward? So that it is plain, as a ſunbean, that theſe obſervations about meats, and days, were matters of *doubtful diſputation*, and mere *indifference* for the time preſent: and the apoſtle therefore exhorts them to exerciſe mutual forbearance in ſuch matters.

Let us now conſider what is the conſequence with reſpect to Relief terms of communion. Our Author affirms, that this paſſage is *direct* and *pointed*, the *cleareſt foundation* for holding communion with Epiſcopalians and Independents, if he can judge in charity that they are godly. The reader may eaſily perceive, a very genteel compliment to Preſbyterian government and diſcipline. If the apoſtle's enjoining forbearance in matters of doubtful diſputation, and indifference, is a *direct, pointed, clear foundation* for holding communion with Epiſcopalians and Independents, it natively follows, that Preſbyterian church government and diſcipline, Prelacy and Independency, are all *direct, pointed, clear* matters of *doubtful diſputation* and *indifference*. For the apoſtle enjoining forbearance in matters of doubtful diſputation and indifference, will warrant forbearance, *only* in matters of the *ſame kind*. I need not inſiſt on this, as it is quite evident.

I ſhall now animadvert a little on Mr. H——n's explication of this paſſage, in which, for ought I know, he ſtands by himſelf; but no doubt conſidered it as more favourable to his own terms of communion. He informs us, page 60. '*This paſſage of ſcripture ſhows us, in the cleareſt manner, that Chriſtians may maintain, that to be an ordinance of Chriſt, which is none of his ordinances, and yet they may be entitled to communion.—The obſervation of the ceremonial law, though once an ordinance of Chriſt, ceaſed to be one of his ordinances after his death. It was only a human ordinance, as it was obſerved by the Jewiſh Chriſtians in the church of Rome.*' He likewiſe informs us, that theſe Jewiſh Chriſtians were *ignorant, erroneous*, yea, *erred groſly*; and not only wanted to *introduce their human ordinances* into the public worſhip of God, but to make them the terms of their communion. For brevity's ſake, I have not quoted at large every paſſage in which theſe things are aſſerted; but the reader will ſee them all contained in his obſervations after his paraphraſe. And this may ſhew the reader, in what light Mr. H——n conſiders this diſ-

pute, between the Gentile and Jewiſh Chriſtians at Rome. It was not about things indifferent, for the time preſent, but the Jewiſh Chriſtians were ignorant, erred, erred groſly, wanted to connect human ordinances with Chriſt's inſtitutions, and ſtate theſe as terms of admiſſion; yet, ſtill the Gentile Chriſtians were to admit them to ſealing ordinances. This is juſt, in other words, that although profeſſed Chriſtians ſhould mingle their own inventions with Chriſt's inſtitutions, we have no right to refuſe them admiſſion to ſealing ordinances. And his conſequence is very native, Epiſcopalians blend their own inventions with Chriſt's inſtitutions; but this is no ſufficient reaſon to refuſe them admiſſion to ſealing ordinances.

Now, ſuppoſing this to be the meaning of the paſſage, it would be groſs enough to ſuppoſe, that the apoſtle enjoined forbearance on the Gentile converts, in matters ſo aggravated, as *groſs error*, and mingling *human inventions* with *Chriſt's inſtitutions*. But, I would further obſerve, that the apoſtle does not merely enjoin forbearance on the Gentile converts, but he gives expreſs and poſitive allowance unto both Jews and Gentiles; *Let every man be fully perſuaded in his own mind.* This is very conſiſtent, if we conſider theſe ceremonies as matters of indifference, as yet; but, if we view them as being as heinous as our Author repreſents them, how ſhocking is it to think, that the apoſtle would not only enjoin forbearance, but give poſitive allowance; yea, not only approve, but himſelf practiſe; for he ſhaved his head, having a vow, and circumciſed Timothy alſo! Does the apoſtle then give poſitive allowance for *ignorance*, *error*, *groſs error*, introducing *human ordinances* with *Chriſt's ordinances*, and ſanctify all by his own example!—I am certain, it will be no eaſy matter with many to perſuade themſelves, that the apoſtle was an advocate, both by precept and practice, for error and adulterating the ordinances of God. If our Author's comment is juſt, it is evident, men may intermix whatever human ordinances, or inventions they pleaſe, with the ordinances of Chriſt; and, they have the apoſtle's expreſs allowance, or rather the allowance of the Spirit of God, by the apoſtle.

Our Author's deſign may be perceived with half an eye: he endeavours to repreſent the notions of theſe Jewiſh Chriſtians, concerning meats and days, in the very worſt light; and

then makes the apoſtle enjoin forbearance, and admiſſion to ſealing ordinances, in order to countenance his own looſe terms of communion with thoſe of the Epiſcopalian and Independent perſuaſions. But it is his foundation-miſtake, that he does not advert, that the apoſtle not only enjoins forbearance, but gives expreſs poſitive allowance. How abſurd is it to think, that the Spirit of God ſhould deliver all Chriſt's inſtitutions in his word, and conclude with an awful denounciation againſt the man who adds to them; and, at the ſame time, give men poſitive allowance, if they are only perſuaded in their own minds, to add to Chriſt's inſtitutions whatever human inventions they ſee meet! Our author could not well imagine, that any man would be ſo blind as not ſee this to be the native conſequence of his comment on this paſſage. It is doing him no injury, when I take it for granted, that he approves of the doctrine contained in our Catechiſms, larger and ſhorter, as agreeable to the word of God: But theſe excellent ſummaries repreſent adding to God's ordinances, or not keeping them pure, as a direct breach of the ſecond commandment. Our author's comment then makes the apoſtle, or the Spirit of God by the apoſtle, to give men poſitive allowance for ignorance, error, groſs error, blending their own inventions with divine ordinances, or violating the ſecond command at pleaſure. And why not ſome little terraphim to quicken devotion, if they are only perſuaded in their own minds?

This comment appears to me to open a door for Rome's ſuperſtition. What is the Prelatic hierarchy, but the footſtool by which the man of ſin ſeated himſelf in the temple of God; biſhops ſtill advancing in dignity, until an univerſal and infallible one was eſtabliſhed? And what are the Engliſh ceremonies, but dregs of Romiſh Antichriſt retained? And here Prelacy has juſt as kindly a reception into our boſom as Preſbytery. Nay, in this comment, a wide door is opened for the idolatrous ceremonies of Rome; for, let a man be perſuaded in his own mind, he has the expreſs allowance of the Spirit of God, to introduce what human inventions he pleaſes. I make no doubt but numbers of Papiſts are perſuaded in their own mind, as much as other erroneous perſons are; the ſcripture is expreſs, that *God would ſend them ſtrong deluſion to believe a lie.* Here

then a door opened for all Rome's trumpery; they are perſuaded in their own minds: the apoſtle, by the Spirit of God, gives them *expreſs allowance*; and who *dare diſallow?* You may ſee very evidently, the conſequence of our author's ſenſe of this paſſage. I cannot fail to think, that it would have been as like a Chriſtian, not to have charged us with Popery, which he well knows we diſapprove of as much as he can do: and as prudent to have refrained from ſuch a charge, till he was able to give an account of *his own principles*, without affording us abundant opportunity to return him his own compliment.— We need not go far from home to ſeek Popery, while this commentary is in vogue.

To ſum up what I have ſaid on this particular: if we underſtand this paſſage of ſcripture in the ſenſe in which I have viewed it, and every commentator I have ſeen, namely, that theſe ceremonies were for the time indifferent; then, before my opponent find his terms of communion in it, he muſt allow, that Preſbyterian government and diſcipline, Prelacy and Independency, are all matters of mere indifference. Or, if we underſtand it in our author's ſenſe; then, before he find his terms of communion, he muſt grant that the Spirit of God, by the apoſtle, gives men expreſs allowance, to conjoin human ordinances with Chriſt's ordinances at pleaſure; or to violate the ſecond command as often as they will, if they are only perſuaded in their own minds. — One or other of theſe muſt be admitted, or our author muſt ſearch for his terms of communion ſomewhere elſe; and, I apprehend, ſomewhere elſe than the word of God. Which of theſe he may chuſe, or in what manner he may deſtroy this ſubterfuge of Seceders, I know not; but it is not in the leaſt affected by any thing he has yet advanced. He preſents us with very ſingular terms of communion; he founds them on his *own* ſingular ſenſe of one ſingle paſſage of ſcripture: and a ſenſe of it as groſs in its conſequences as any thing can well be. It is hard to ſay, whether his *confidence*, or his follower's *credulity* is ſtrongeſt, to reſt ſuch an important matter on; I mean not, on a ſingle text, which is certainly a ſufficient foundation, but on a particular *evidently forced ſenſe* of it; and a ſenſe of it inſeparable from the groſſeſt abſurdities. He frequently ſpeaks of matters of leſs importance; and ſo do other divines in explaining this paſſage.

But, at the ſametime, other divines do not conſider the differences among theſe Chriſtians at Rome, as including a blending of human inventions with Chriſt's ordinances, but as matters of *indifference*; and therefore of leſs importance. But ſince our author allows, that there may be a mingling of human ordinances with Chriſt's, and only a matter of leſs importance: he will likewiſe allow, that there may be ſuch a blending of them, as may be of the laſt importance. He ought certainly to do the generation the juſtice to let them know, what theſe human ordinances are, which connected with Chriſt's inſtitutions, are only of little importance; and what are theſe human inventions, which are of greater importance; arranging them in proper departments, that the generation may be able to ſay thus far, and no farther the ſecond commandment may be broken, and the violation only trifling, or of little importance.

After our Author's paraphraſe, he has a number of *very important obſervations* to deduce, ſhowing how exactly the apoſtle's directions to theſe Chriſtians at Rome, correſponded with Relief terms of communion.

'1. *This paſſage ſhows, that men may have different views,* 'in ſome things in religion, and yet be ſincere Chriſtians.' And who ever doubted of this?

'2. *This paſſage ſhows, that men are ſometimes too much* 'diſpoſed to make their own errors and miſtakes, in religion, 'a term of communion.' Nay more, Sir, men are ſometimes diſpoſed, to make their own errors the *criterion* whereby to reprobate all who differ from them, or cut them off from any part in the Redeemer's ſacrifice; witneſs the diſcourſe on church-fellowſhip.

'3. *This paſſage of ſcripture ſhows, that none have a right* 'to impoſe their peculiar ſentiments and opinions, on their fellow Chriſtians. *And the Seceders here come in for their* 'ſhare.' I have already evinced, that this is a charge without any proof, unleſs numerous and confident aſſertions can be ſuppoſed to conſtitute one: we hate impoſition as much as Mr. H——n does. Here he aſſerts very juſtly, that we need not go to Rome in queſt of Popery, becauſe we may find it at the door, in his next obſervation.

'4. *This paſſage of ſcripture ſhows us, in the cleareſt man-*

'*ner, that Chriſtians may maintain that to be an ordinance of* '*Chriſt, which is none of his ordinances; and yet they may be* '*entitled to communion with other Chriſtians.*' Your ſenſe of the paſſage, Sir, bears much more than this, namely, that the apoſtle, by the Spirit of God, gives men *expreſs allowance*, yea, well nigh, a *poſitive injunction*, to conjoin their own ordinances with Chriſt's ordinances; *Let every man be fully perſuaded in his own mind*, and then uſe his freedom. If Papiſts, therefore, are not acting contrary to their light, they have the divine allowance; and are entitled to communion.

'5. *This paſſage of ſcripture ſhows, that a church is not at* '*liberty to exclude from her communion, weak brethren, who* '*differ from her in any of the leſs important points of religion.*' Had you ſaid *matters of doubtful diſputation*, or *indifference*, which the apoſtle allows a man to do, or not, according to his own light, you had then the apoſtle's reaſoning to ſupport your obſervation: But we are not yet convinced, that adulterating Chriſt's ordinances, by conjoining human inventions with them, is a matter of leſs importance. You own, Sir, p. 65. that this is a matter of *real importance* and *concern*. Now, *adulterating divine ordinances*, a *matter of real importance and concern*, but only a matter of *leſs importance*, is ſomewhat ſimilar to a *full*, but *incomplete* pardon of ſin: if keeping God's ordinances pure is a matter of *little* importance; what is it which is a matter of *great* importance?

His ſixth and ſeventh obſervations I have little quarrel with, providing that *doubtful* and *indifferent*, be ſubſtitute in the place of his *non-eſſential* and *leſs important* matters. But this being done, his application, or illuſtration of theſe obſervations, is only a figment of his own framing; till ſuch time as he prove, that adulterating Chriſt's ordinances, Preſbytery, Prelacy, and Independency, are all matters of mere *indifference*.

To his eight obſervation, that we are to receive erring Chriſtians, but not to approve of their errors; I anſwer, if they are miſtaken only in ſuch matters as the apoſtle here ſpeaks of, it does not deſerve the name of error: there is very little propriety in ſtiling that *error*, or *immorality* either, which the Spirit of God allows men to do, or not do, if they act not againſt their own light. But if it is *groſs error* which our author maintains was the caſe with theſe Chriſtians at Rome, even

although theſe *groſs errors* ſhould be of *little* importance, we wiſh to be informed how we are to admit the abettors of them, without a practical approbation? The caſe of the church of Rome is not the ſhadow of a proof; for, it was not groſs error, it was only different ſentiments about matters of indifference, which does not deſerve the name of error.—Theſe are his *very important* obſervations; and the Reader may judge what foundation they have in the paſſage on which he comments.

His next work is to deſtroy three ſeveral ſubterfuges, to which Seceders may have recourſe. This was very idle work; for, I can aſſure him, we have ſeen nothing as yet, which we have any occaſion to evade: Nay, we can ſay in the moſt diſpaſſionate manner, that we are ſurprized to hear him talk of, a *direct*, *pointed*, *clear* foundation for his terms of communion, as we have ſeldom ſeen any portion of ſcripture more evidently wreſted and perverted.

We have his ſeventh general branch, page 67, which conſiſts in aſcertaining the genuine ſenſe of ſome paſſages of ſcripture, urged by Seceders, in ſupport of their own plan of communion, and againſt the Relief plan. I have no occaſion to regard what he advances on this branch, as he keeps the *Author of the Relief ſcheme conſidered* moſtly in his eye; and the reader may judge of the explication, that Author gives of the ſcriptures he quotes. I ſhall only obſerve, that had Mr. H——n taken as contracted a view of every ſcripture, as he does of theſe quoted by Mr. Ramſay, we had never been troubled with his prodigiouſly extenſive comment on the xivth of the Romans; it would have been confined to Jewiſh ceremonies for ever.

On this branch, he informs us of the neceſſity of the Relief miniſters being unconnected with the judicatories of the eſtabliſhed church. The faithful miniſters in the eſtabliſhed church have it not in their power to relieve diſtreſſed congregations: and, inſtead of the Seceſſion being any relief to them, they have much need to be relieved from the errors and oppreſſion of Seceders. And for the *Chapel of Eaſe ſcheme*, '*It is nothing* '*but a human expedient, framed by church politicians, to pre-* '*ſerve the Chriſtian people in the communion of the church,* '*after they are robbed of their liberty.*' But, what is that li-

berty the Chapel people are robbed of, which the Relief people enjoy? The Chapel people have liberty to chuſe their own paſtors, who perhaps preach the goſpel as purely as the Relief miniſters do. As a Synod, the Relief miniſters have the advantage, as they may emit a Judicial Teſtimony for injured truth; but this they prudently decline. But to balance this neglected advantage, the Chapel miniſters have liberty of communion with the godly miniſters in the eſtabliſhed church, this is an acknowledged advantage; for Mr. H——n bitterly laments his being deprived of it.—He tells us in another performance, that the Chapel ſcheme divides the key of doctrine, and the key of government and diſcipline. Some of the Chapel miniſters, it is ſaid, have the power of diſcipline in the radical court; and, if a ſcandal is of ſuch a nature, that it ought not to be ended in a ſeſſion, they can refer it to a ſuperior court. Mr. H——n tells us, as we will hear afterwards, that they do not ſeparate between the ſeals of the covenant, and the diſcipline of the church, although they admit worthy Chriſtians to ſealing ordinances from other denominations, to whom they *cannot exerciſe diſcipline*. And the reaſon he gives is, they require a *ſufficient certificate*, and this has evidently *a reſpect* unto the purity of diſcipline. But, if a regular certificate will juſtify the Relief miniſters in not exerciſing diſcipline themſelves, a regular reference ought likewiſe to juſtify the Chapel miniſters, as having evidently a *reſpect* to the purity of diſcipline. Why, the difference ſeems to be this, the Chapel miniſters muſt depend on theſe with whom they are in full connection, for the exerciſe of ſeveral acts of diſcipline; the Relief miniſters muſt depend on theſe, with whom they are not in full connection. —He likewiſe informs us, that the Chapel miniſters violate the ſecond command, in not keeping God's ordinances entire. But Mr. H——n, in his comment on the xivth of the Romans, makes the apoſtle give men poſitive allowance to violate the ſecond command; by not keeping God's ordinances pure, but *adding* to them at pleaſure, if they are only fully perſuaded in their own mind; and, why not diminiſh alſo? And can he give any proof, that the Chapel miniſters and people are not perſuaded in their own mind, as much as the Relief? I apprehend the reader will not imagine, that I mean an approbation of the Chapel ſcheme; but, although the account Mr. H——n

gives of it is juſt, it will appear to ſome, almoſt as applicable to his own ſcheme. With reſpect to the Relief miniſters erecting themſelves into ſeparate judicatories, he might juſt have told plainly, that the miniſters of the eſtabliſhed church, would not allow them to ſit in judicatories. I know not if he will refuſe, that ſome of the Relief miniſters at firſt, inſiſted in the judicatories, to be conſidered as in full connection ſtill, but were rejected. In page 73. he proceeds to his laſt branch on terms of communion.

8. '*That on the ſubject of communion, it is of importance to* '*enquire, whoſe table the ſacramental table is?*' However important this may be, I have not the leaſt doubt, but every Chriſtian knows it as well as Mr. H——n himſelf. Nay, more; Seceders know very well, that whoſe table it is? is one queſtion: And who are they, whom our miniſters are warranted to admit? is another, and a very different one. There may be many of the children who need the diſcipline of their Father's houſe; and, were we to admit them into ſealing ordinances, before they ſubmit to diſcipline, we could not be ſaid to give them their *meat in due ſeaſon*.

He tells us, page 73. with a very ſolemn air, '*The Seced-* '*ing prieſthood, ſhould firſt aſſure themſelves and mankind,* '*that none but Seceders are the children of God; and ſhould* '*think how they will anſwer to him that judgeth righteouſly,* '*when the puzzling queſtion ſhall be put, By what authority* '*have you ſpread my table only for your party, which I have* '*covered for all my ſincere followers?*' But, if we are at no loſs to anſwer *now*, from the word of God, which our Author very plainly intimates a ſuſpicion of, we have no reaſon to fear, that he who judgeth righteouſly, will *ever* reject his own word as our plea. I ſhall, for once, adopt my opponent's dialect, although it is not very decent; and inform my reader, that I have another puzzling queſtion to put to the Relief prieſthood. If I underſtand their ſynodical act, and likewiſe the diſcourſe on church-fellowſhip; although they admit Epiſcopalians to join with them, they hold it unlawful for their people to join with Epiſcopalians, when they diſpenſe the ſacrament.

Now, when the ſacrament is diſpenſed among Epiſcopalians, according to Mr. H——n's doctrine, it is not the *table*, or *invitation of Epiſcopalians*, it is Chriſt's *table* and *invitation*,

he covers it for ALL his children, he invites them ALL. I aſk then, By what authority do the Relief miniſters maintain, that it is their people's duty to deſpiſe Chriſt's *table*, or refuſe his invitation? And tell their younger brethren, in a *haughty* and *imperious* manner, you may ſit there at your *by-table*, we will not come nigh you, for we are holier than you? When Mr. H——n anſwers this, he will furniſh Seceders with a tolerable anſwer to his puzzling query, *Whoſe table is it?*

After he has deſcanted a little, concerning the communion-table being converted for the children of God, *as ſuch*, he adds, '*Which proves to a demonſtration, that the communion-table,* '*in the Seceſſion, is not covered for the friends of the Redeem-* '*er, as ſuch, but for the votaries of the Seceſſion.*' Here, Sir, I appeal to every man of common ſenſe, if according to your own doctrine, you do not charge the GREAT REDEEMER Himſelf, with covering his own table ONLY for the *votaries of Prelacy*. When the ſacrament is diſpenſed among Epiſcopalians, you do not refuſe, that it is Chriſt's *table* and *invitation*. If it is covered by him *for your connections*, and they are invited by him, to uſe your own language, what *daring preſumption* to maintain, that they ought not to partake? How dare you to diſſuade the children from their bread; and make them refuſe Chriſt's invitation? How will you anſwer to him who judgeth righteouſly, for diſſuading *any* of his children from *his table*, which he ſpreads for them ALL, and invites them ALL! If you will affirm, that it is not covered *for your connections*, that they are not *invited*; who gave you this excluſive privilege, have not every denomination of Chriſtians, who differ from Prelacy, as good a right to maintain, that it is not *covered for them*, and, that they are not *invited*, as you have? The conſequence then is plain, as written with a ſun-beam, that according to your doctrine, the GREAT REDEEMER covers his table for, and invites the votaries of Prelacy ALONE, when the ſacrament is diſpenſed among them. If prejudice has not entirely blinded you, you muſt ſee yourſelf in that very condemnation, with which you ſo liberally charge others. And, I would give this friendly advice, when you publiſh again, to refrain from ſuch Billinſgate jears, till you are capable of ſeeing their conſequence. I can aſſure you, it will not do your

publication the leaſt injury, with men of judgment and diſcernment.

The Author of the diſcourſe on Church-fellowſhip gives us the reaſon, why the Relief people muſt not join with Epiſcopalians; although it is Chriſt's table. '*We are to keep at the greateſt diſtance from every thing in religion, that is ſtamped with no higher authority, than that of men.*' After all the prodigious bluſter then, we are well nigh agreed. Although it is the Lord's table, this will not ſecure the Relief people from coming too nigh what is wrong with Epiſcopalians, if they join with them, '*It would be communion with others* (ſays our Author) *in their ſins;*' and we are convinced, that although it is Chriſt's table, this will not ſecure us from coming too nigh what is wrong with others, if we admit them; *A little leaven, leaveneth the whole lump.*

He tells us, page 75. concerning our plan of communion, '*Whether it has now got to the centre of its reſt, time will determine.*' Perhaps, it is like the Relief plan of electing miniſters: At firſt it was *contributors* and *proprietors*, now Mr. H——n aſſures us, it is the *Chriſtian people.* If this is ſo, or if it is now got to the centre of its reſt, time muſt declare.

I ſhall now preſent the reader with a ſhort view of Mr. H——n's eight branches of argument, for his terms of communion, ſeparated from that lumber, amidſt which they lie buried in his performance. 1. *The example of Seceders.* But this can be no proof, as it was fifteen hundred years after the days of the apoſtles. 2. *The terms of communion fixed in the word of God.* But this can be no proof, till it is evinced, that Relief terms of communion are fixed in the word. 3. *Only real ſaints have a right to ſealing ordinances, in the ſight of God.* What does this prove in favour of the Relief, or againſt the Seceſſion? 4. *Viſible ſaints have a right in the eye of the church.* But he gives us no proof, that *only viſible ſaintſhip* is requiſite; and, till this is done, it cannot ſupport the Relief plan. 5. *When viſible ſaints expoſe themſelves to diſcipline, they are to be excluded till it is exerciſed.* This deſtroys his former argument, unleſs he can prove, that every thing which renders a Chriſtian liable to diſcipline, bereaves him

alſo of viſible ſaintſhip in the judgment of charity; which, I ſuppoſe, he will not attempt. I might here aſk the reader, what has he yet proven? 6. *Perfect unanimity is not neceſſary.* They may anſwer this, who contend for it; and, I apprehend, it will be more eaſily defended, than Mr. H——n's plan. On this we have nothing in ſupport of the Relief plan, but one paſſage of ſcripture, in my view, quite miſunderſtood; and, I leave the reader to judge, from the account I have given of it, if it gives any countenance to the Relief plan. *The 7th is an anſwer to ſome of Mr. Ramſay's ſcripture arguments.* But it is no proof, that the Relief plan is juſt, or the Seceſſion plan wrong, although every argument againſt the one, or in ſupport of the other, ſhould not be concluſive. And, I apprehend, Mr. Ramſay does not conſider it as any difficult taſk to ſupport his arguments. 8. *Whoſe table is it?* But, this is very different from, *whom* are we warranted to admit? Beſides, he involves himſelf in the ſame condemnation. — I leave the reader to judge for himſelf, if Mr. H——n has yet produced one concluſive argument, for his terms of communion.

I ſhall now mention, very ſhortly, a few objections to the Relief plan of communion.

1. It has no *foundation* in the word of God. Mr. H—n has preſented us with only one paſſage of ſcripture, and it is evidently perverted.

2. It is well calculated to encourage *Epiſcopalians* to perſevere in maintaining their deteſted ſupremacy, and antiſcriptural ceremonies; ſince Preſbyterians themſelves, who have the greateſt pretenſions to ſtrictneſs, conſider them only as trifling circumſtantials.

3. It is calculated to encourage thoſe of the Epiſcopalian and Independent perſuaſions, to *perſiſt* in their oppoſition to the *ſcriptural* government of the houſe of God, when they hear profeſſed Preſbyterians acknowledging, as Mr. H——n does, that it is only a darkly revealed, leſs important matter.

4. It is likewiſe adapted to encourage profeſſed Preſbyterians, to conſider the diſcipline and government of the houſe of God, as a matter of *little moment*, not worth contending for; and it is well, if they are not matters of indifference. Any one may ſee with half an eye, that a notion of this ſort

is greatly on the increaſe; and it is the word of Chriſt's patience to oppoſe it, not to encourage it.

5. It is adapted to render the generation *careleſs* about the word of God, a few eſſentials excepted. And when theſe are undetermined, if once men are allowed to curtail, it is hard to ſay, where they will ſtop. Some of them can declare openly already, that the New Teſtament is ſufficient, they have very little concern with the OLD.

6. It ſeparates between the *ſeals* of the covenant, and the *diſcipline* of the houſe of God. On this plan, Relief miniſters admit theſe to ſealing ordinances, who, ſhould they preſume to exerciſe diſcipline towards them, would ſoon let them know, that they had no connection with them. There is no warrant for this in ſcripture.

7. This plan plainly implies, that maintaining the deteſted *ſupremacy*, does not deſerve the diſcipline of God's houſe. Theſe who deſerve diſcipline, ought not to be admitted to ſealing ordinances, till it is exerciſed. But, according to this plan, tearing the Redeemer's crown from his head, and making it a trifling appendage to the crown of an earthly ſovereign, does not exclude from ſealing ordinances, and conſequently does not deſerve any cenſure at all.

8. It makes that which is confeſſedly ſo heinous, that it is better to ſeparate than be guilty of it, no *ground*, however, of church cenſure. It is better to ſeparate, than be in full connection with *intruders* and *legal preachers*; but theſe who continue in full connection, are chearfully admitted to ſealing ordinances; an evidence, that although it is a juſt ground of ſeparation, it does not deſerve diſcipline of any ſort.

9. This plan cuts off every thing, whether in principle or practice, from being any ground of *church cenſure*; if it is not inconſiſtent with a gracious ſtate. And, how many errors in principle, and irregularities in practice, muſt paſs unobſerved?

10. It is entirely *ſelfiſh*. If theſe things without which we cannot be *ſaved* are maintained, we are welcome to ſealing ordinances, while other things, with which our Redeemer's honour is very intimately connected, ſuch as robbing him of his Headſhip over his church, is a mere unimportant matter.

In a word, this plan is well fitted, I wiſh I could ſay, that

it does not ſeem to be *deſigned*, to throw the generation *looſe* of any thing like principles, not only with reſpect to government and diſcipline; but, it is hard to ſay what lengths we may go in doctrinal errors alſo, and ſcreen ourſelves, by alledging, that they are only *uneſſential* and *unimportant* matters. And, if once a plan of this ſort gains ground, it will be no ſurpriſe to ſee a little leaven, leavening the whole lump.

His Appendix is, no doubt, a *moſt maſterly* piece of its kind. He has convicted an *illeberal bigot* of many falſhoods; yet ſtill the bigot gives a very ſatisfying reply. He reflects very ſeverely on Mr. Ramſay's parentage and education; *Bred upon a dunghil.* But Seceders wiſh to be informed of our Author's pedigree; for, they hear, that he was bred up by bigoted Seceders, on a DUNGHILL, like Mr. Ramſay. And, that the firſt exertions of uncommon genius (which he ſeems to be ſo confident of, in every page) appeared, in a manly *contempt* of the religious notions of his immediate parents; and, the ſelf-conceited dream, too pleaſant to find its centre of reſt, till, like another Nero, he had the necks of all his covenanting anceſtors on the block at once. It is no diſparagment to our Author, that he was educated by Seceders; but, he ought not to revile Mr. Ramſay, on this account; who, although compariſons are odious, has nothing to fear from a compariſon, whether with reſpect to parentage, natural abilities, or liberal education.

He boaſts very much of the Seceſſion having felt the *effects* of the Relief ſcheme; and, that they will yet feel it more ſenſibly. And, in the concluſion of his performance, he can foretel the iſſue of this public debate. And the reader may obſerve, that it is not merely the goodneſs of his cauſe; but, '*If I have conducted this vindication*, &c.' *Egomet* muſt be in for a principal ſhare. *Why doſt thou boaſt, O mighty man, of miſchief, and of ill!*—But, after all his empty parade, I have been in the neighbourhood of Relief congregations, and ſeverals of my brethren alſo, almoſt ſince their commencement; and I know of no injury they have done to any of us, and as little probability of it at preſent as ever. The progreſs of the Relief was, no doubt, rapid for a while; but it ſeems now to be ſomething at a ſtand. Novelty is wearing off, and men are beginning to ſee through the maſk of pretended Catholic love; for, who ſo bigotedly ſevere againſt every one who differs from

them? witneſs my opponent's publications. But the queſtion is not, What is the ſcheme moſt likely to *prevail?* But what is the ſcheme which keeps higheſt to the *ſacred oracles?* And the reader muſt judge for himſelf.

SECT. VIII.

Containing Remarks on Mr. H——n's Animadverſions upon the Re-exhibition of our Teſtimony.

AS this performance is much of a piece with his Appendix, I might have paſſed it over in ſilence, as unworthy of the ſmalleſt regard; but leaſt our Author ſhould conſider it as unanſwerable, I ſhall offer a few remarks upon it.

After informing us how much the Relief ſcheme is gaining ground, page 1. he adds, concerning the Re-exhibition, '*which* '*I conſider as a feeble, nerveleſs, and unſucceſsful attempt to* '*ſupport their peculiar ſcheme of principles, which is dwindling* '*into inſignificance among men of diſcernment.*' The Reader knows by this time, that his men of *diſcernment*, and *Relief connexions*, are ſynonimous terms. As far as I know, our principles are as much eſteemed *now*, and in as flouriſhing a ſituation, as ever they were ſince the Seceſſion commenced.—There is ſome reaſon, however, to ſuſpect, that my opponent is aware, that men of diſcernment are now beginning to ſee through the glare of flaming pretenſions; and though the Relief church ſeemed to carry all before it for a while, it is now becoming, like Sampſon, when his locks were ſhaven, weak as other men. And all the rancour he diſcovers, ſeems to be the fruit of ſome diſtreſſing apprehenſion, that his own cauſe is ſinking into inſignificance; which he unſucceſsfully attempts to ſupport by virulence, and vain boaſting. I can freely ſay, that, as far as I know, there is not the leaſt foundation for his boaſting in the weſt country; and he knows himſelf, if there is any appearance of a decline in the Seceſſion in his own neighbourhood: he may know, at leaſt, that the very contrary is truth. But however this be, *numbers* and *applauſe*, are no

concluſive argument neither for the Seceſſion nor Relief. *The world may wonder for a while after the beaſt.*

He ſeems now to be ſenſible, that the abuſive manner in which he has treated Mr. Ramſay in his Appendix, is quite diſagreeable to ſober people. He is mightily ſurprized at their *unreaſonable delicacy;* and alledges, that the *edition of the ſcriptures, which he peruſes,* furniſhes him with examples; and in this manner endeavours to palm ſuch ſcurrility on the word of God, or as the Pſalmiſt expreſſes it, *Thou thoughteſt that I was altogether ſuch an one as thyſelf.* But why ſhould our author be ſurprized, although the ſcripture hold true, Prov. xxiv. 9. *And the ſcorner is an abomination to men?* It is true, in the word of God, we have the ſin and danger of wicked men ſet before them in the ſtrongeſt terms, as means of their conviction. But ſuppoſing Mr R—y has miſunderſtood ſome of the Relief principles, as it is not a very eaſy matter to know them; or, that he has conſidered ſome branches of their management as the general practice of the Society, becauſe he well knew it was the method of procedure in the congregations around him, while there might be exceptions in other corners; ſuppoſing all this to be true, where do we find, in all the ſcripture, a reſpectable miniſter of the goſpel, (for miſtakes of this ſort,) repreſented as one in *heart, counſel,* and *operation,* with Satan? Much leſs, certainly, if no ſuch miſtakes are committed. If Mr. H——n can point out this, it will be ſomething to his purpoſe; but if he cannot, in vain does he attempt to faſten ſuch abuſe on the word of God. And, I apprehend, it will be found only in that edition which he peruſes; I am certain there is no ſuch thing in mine. It was an obſervation of one, that if Mr. H——n had dipt his pen in the infernal lake, and attempted to draw a picture of the devil; he could not have given it more gloomy ſhades, than he has given to the picture of a reſpectable goſpel miniſter. The reader may judge, if the word of God gives any countenance to ſuch a practice. It is truly lamentable, to ſee one who profeſſes to be an ambaſſador of the meek and lowly Jeſus, *who, when he was reviled, reviled not again,* write in ſuch a manner, as a ſober heathen might bluſh at; and then aſſert, that the word of God furniſhes a pattern for the unworthy practice!

He proceeds, p. 6. to lay down his plan of conducting him-

ſelf, in his animadverſions on the Re-exhibition. And his firſt charge, is incivility and bad manners; the ſecond, ignorance of Relief principles; the third, ignorance and perverſion of ſcripture; the laſt, groſs miſrepreſentations.

The foundation of his charging us with *incivility* and *bad manners* is this. In the Re-exhibition, after the manner of Mr. Baine's ſeparation from the eſtabliſhed church is obſerved; two queſtions are put. 1. Did Mr. Baine's ſeparation proceed from principle, or ſomething elſe? 2. If it could have been foreſeen, that Dr. Witherſpoon would have emigrated ſo ſoon, would Mr. Baine have left his charge in Paiſley? In his anſwer to the firſt of theſe, he charges the Queriſts with want of charity, and preſumptuous judging of men's motives. But he has certainly forgot, that on the very ſame point, in a former publication, he informs his reader of two reaſons which have been aſſigned, why Seceders ſtated a total ſeparation from the eſtabliſhed church. One, that the church was advancing in defection; another, to ſecure a party to themſelves. Now, had he judged as charitably of us, as he does of Mr. Baine, he would certainly have declared, that he conſidered the firſt of theſe, namely, the church advancing in defection, as the true reaſon why we ſtated a total ſeparation. But it is ſufficient for his charity to us, to mention theſe reaſons, and leave his reader to judge which was the true one; a plain indication that he wiſhed his reader to conſider the laſt as the true one. He is, at leaſt, equally uncharitable to us on the very ſame point, as we are to Mr. Baine. And why then upbraid us with the want of it? For, who thanks him for his charity to Mr. Baine, and his own party, while he is as deſtitute of it to others, as any man can well be?—For his charge of preſumptuouſly judging men's motives; I anſwer, That men's *actions* are frequently ſuch a practical demonſtration of the motives by which they are *actuated*, that it is not *preſumption*, but *ſtupidity*, if we are at a loſs to form a judgment concerning them. —For his charge of incivility, or ill-manners, I hope he does not mean to conſtitute Mr. Baine a cardinal, or metropolitan; and therefore greater reverence due to him than to whole bodies of miniſters.

His reply to the ſecond query is, ‘ *Mr Baine muſt have left* ‘ *his charge in Paiſley, becauſe it is now evident from the*

'*event*;—*the divine purpoſes, reſpecting Mr. Baine, would* '*have been accompliſhed in their ſeaſon, though Dr Witherſpoon* '*had never exiſted.*' Now, this anſwer is either nothing to the purpoſe; or, if it is, it includes the very eſſence of ſtoical fatality. It is plain, the queſtion is not concerning the *end*, but the *means*, or *motives*, on account of which Mr. Baine left Paiſley. He grants this in his former anſwer, when he charges us with judging Mr. Baine's motives. If his anſwer then is any thing to the purpoſe, it is this, that *with*, or *without* means, Mr. B—e behoved to leave Paiſley. It is true, the divine purpoſes will certainly be accompliſhed; but they are always accompliſhed by ſome mean or other, and the mean is fixed as well as the end: and therefore, altho' Paul knew that it was the divine purpoſe, that no man in the ſhip ſhould loſe his life on that occaſion; he tells them, however, that *if the mariners went away* (the mean) *they could not be ſaved.* According to Mr. H—n's doctrine, he would have told them it was the divine purpoſe; and therefore they ſhould be ſaved, although the mariners had never exiſted. There behoved certainly to be ſome mean of bringing about Mr. B—e's leaving Paiſley; and the queſtion is, What was it? And Mr. H—n gives no reply, but ſuch as includes fataliſm in its boſom, or ſeparating between the means and the end. I verily think, that neither the queſtions, nor the anſwers, are of very great importance in the preſent controverſy: but I cannot think, that ſuch doctrine, as ſeparates between the means and the end, ſhould paſs without reprehenſion. It is true, as Mr. H——n obſerves, that men may aſk *little ſplenetic queſtions*; and it is equally true, they may be *actuated* by *little ſplenetic* and *ſelfiſh* motives, in accompliſhing the *divine purpoſes*, and *deſigns of providence*; and the queſtion is, Was it ſo in Mr. Baine's caſe? And it is yet to anſwer.—He informs his reader, that this ſhows of what *unpoliſhed materials* our Synod is compoſed; and that we act inconſiſtent with every rule of *decency* and *decorum*. I know no man who can reprove indecency and indecorum, with a worſe grace than Mr. H——n. As a ſpecimen of the *bright poliſhed* materials of which the ſynod of Relief is compoſed; and their ſtrict attachment to every rule of *decency* and *decorum*, the reader may conſult Mr. H——n's Appendix, and a variety of

other paſſages of his late publications, where he may find very ſtriking caveats againſt indecency and indecorum.

And I am perſuaded, he will join with me, in conſidering it as verily a curioſity, to hear Mr. H——n exclaiming againſt indecency and indecorum; when it will be generally allowed, that the preſent century has not produced an author, more deſtitute of the remoteſt appearance of either decency or decorum.

The Appendix to the Re-exhibition of the Teſtimony, finds fault with ſome of the Relief miniſters, for leaving their charge in the eſtabliſhed church at their own hand, contrary to the rules of the church of Scotland, in her reforming periods, bearing, that after a miniſter has accepted a charge, he is liable to cenſure, if, at his own hand, he give up with it.

This he firſt endeavours to evade, by alledging, that theſe rules reſpected only their own members, and not merely the leaving of a charge, but accepting of another in the ſame religious body. But were not ſome of the Relief miniſters members of the church of Scotland, when they deſerted their charges? And, if theſe rules extend to deſerting a charge, they did certainly extend unto them, in whatever religious body they might accept of another charge. But, perhaps, being ſenſible, that this evaſion was inſufficient; his next anſwer, is an avowed rejection of the laudible rules of the church of Scotland, in her reforming periods, as *lumber*, mere *church appointments*, without any foundation in the New Teſtament. This is conſiderably plain.

It is readily granted, that Preſbyterians, as well as other denominations, have framed regulations, which were not founded upon the word of God. Nor do we pretend to approve of every thing, which has been enacted by the church of Scotland. Beſides, ſome regulations might be neceſſary when ſcarcely ſix in a pariſh could read their Bibles, which would be very untenible in a different ſituation of the church. But to reject the approven rules of the church of Scotland *in cumulo*, as *unſcriptural lumber*, without ſubſtituting any thing in their room, is a very different matter.

I ſhall only obſerve, with reſpect to the rules in queſtion, namely, that miniſters ought not to deſert their charge at their

own hand, that the apoſtle enjoins, 1 Cor. xiv. 40. *Let all things be done decently, and in order:* And declares, ver. 32, 33. *The ſpirits of the prophets are ſubject to the prophets: For God is not the Author of confuſſion, but of peace.* It is true, the apoſtle is ſpeaking particularly of order in public worſhip; but I know no rule of interpretation, for confining ſuch a general expreſſion as ALL THINGS, merely to public worſhip. I could mention divines of good reputation, and no friends to Preſbyterian rules neither, who allow, that this direction reſpects the whole of the preceding epiſtle, their diviſions, ſentences of excommunication, *&c.* Yea, who maintain, that the words may be conſidered as a general rule, for the decent and orderly management of all things, relating to the worſhip of God, and diſcipline of his houſe †. And, in this ſenſe the generality of Preſbyterian divines explain the words. And, Mr. H——n may be well aſſured, that Seceders pay very little attention to his ſingular expoſitions; ſuch as his explication of the xivth of the Romans. Now, when the church has eſtabliſhed rules, which no man (except theſe who are under the influence of a moſt unreaſonable, and obſtinate prejudice) can refuſe to be neceſſary for decency and order, and to avoid anarchy and confuſion; theſe rules have ſomething more than mere church authority to ſupport them; they are founded upon the direction of an inſpired apoſtle.

And when a miniſter accepts of a charge, and ſolemnly engages to be SUBJECT TO HIS BRETHREN, acting agreeable unto theſe rules, which they have eſtabliſhed for conducting themſelves, agreeable unto the word of God, and founded upon th' direction of the apoſtle; this plainly implies a profeſſed approbation of theſe rules, as well as ſubjection unto his brethren. And, if he does not approve of theſe rules, by which his brethren profeſs to conduct themſelves he ought candidly to declare his diſapprobation. After all this, will any man affirm, that it is either decent or orderly to deſert his charge, without acknowledging his brethren to whom he has promiſed ſubjection, or regarding theſe rules of which he has practically declared his approbation? I apprehend no civil ſociety would judge it very orderly, if theſe whom they had entruſted with their moſt in-

† See Dr. Gill on the text.

tereſting concerns, and who had, perhaps, ſolemnly engaged, to be faithful in managing every thing agreeable to the eſtabliſhed regulations of the ſociety, ſhould at once deſert it, without giving them any account, or reaſon of their elopement. And were miniſters to deſert their charges at pleaſure, nothing could be expected, but diſorder and confuſion. It is conſiderably evident, therefore, that the rules in queſtion have ſomething more than church authority to ſupport them.

But he has now a number of queries to put to us, page 8. and expects, we will have the good breeding to anſwer them. And therefore, although they are evidently of the *little ſplenetic* kind, I ſhall endeavour to anſwer them with all the good breeding I am maſter of.

Q. 1. '*Does any thing deſerve the name of reformation in* '*the Chriſtian church, that has only the ſanction of eccleſiaſti-* '*cal, but not of divine authority?*' I readily anſwer, in the negative. But, that a miniſter having no right to deſert his charge at his own hand, is ſupported only by church authority, is yet to prove; and, I expect my opponent will have the good breeding, not to attempt a proof.

2. '*Has the church of Scotland, or the Seceſſion church,* '*any better right to frame ſtatutes unſupported by divine au-* '*thority, than the church of Rome has?*' They ſurely have no right to frame any ſuch ſtatutes. But, I muſt here aſk, in my turn, Will our Author's bare aſſertion, that any thing is deſtitute of divine authority, be a ſufficient evidence, that it is ſo, without ſo much as attempting a proof? which is evidently the caſe here; for he aſſerts, but does not ſo much as attempt to prove, that the ſtatutes in queſtion are ſupported only by church authority. It is ſomething ſtrange, that he ſhould imagine, that his *ipſe dixit*, or bare aſſertion, is ſufficient.

3. '*Can they prove, that, where Chriſt has left his church* '*at liberty, eccleſiaſtical judicatories have a right to abridge* '*that liberty?*' I anſwer, They certainly have no ſuch right. The reader will remember, that theſe queries reſpect miniſters deſerting their charge at pleaſure. I muſt, therefore, be allowed to aſk, when a miniſter has ſolemnly promiſed ſubjection to his brethren in the Lord, in his receiving a charge, and practically declared his approbation of their eſtabliſhed rules, is it

really a branch of that liberty wherewith Chriſt has made him free, *to deſert his charge at pleaſure*, without regarding his brethren, or theſe rules of which he has declared his approbation, contrary to all order in any well regulated ſociety whatever? I might likewiſe aſk, what is the difference between our Author's *liberty*, and *licentiouſneſs?* But, as the queriſt takes every opportunity of pretending to be a ſtrenuous advocate for *Chriſtian liberty*, why does he not maintain, that as miniſters have a right to deſert their people at pleaſure, ſo the people, in their turn, have a right to turn off their miniſters at pleaſure? For ſhame! Chain the people to a miniſter, like *galley ſlaves*, with a LEGAL bond, while the miniſter himſelf, like the wicked, has no *bands*. Is this to be an advocate for Chriſtian liberty?

4. '*If they maintain, that church decrees, though without* '*a foundation in the word, are obligatory on the church of* '*Chriſt, how will they diſprove the obligation of the ſuperſti-* '*tions of Rome on the Chriſtian church?*' The queriſt is more cautious than uſual in this queſtion. He only ſays, IF they do ſo and ſo. It is time enough therefore to give an anſwer, when he has proven, that we do ſo. If it had been in his power to evince, that the church decrees in queſtion have no foundation in the word of God, the reader may be certain he would have heard of it.

5. '*Can they prove, that the New-Teſtament Preſbytery, as* '*exemplified in the firſt Chriſtian churches, and included in* '*the writings of the venerable apoſtles of Chriſt, includes all* '*the lumber of church acts and decrees, that have been eſta-* '*bliſhed by Preſbyterians, and even by themſelves, ſince theſe* '*inſpired men were laid in their graves?*' I readily grant, that in one view our queriſt has here propoſed a very difficult taſk. For I apprehend, ſetting the *lumber* aſide, it would be no eaſy matter to go through all the laudible acts of Preſbyterians, for more than ſixteen hundred years, which are founded upon the word of God, and which *diſaffected* and *diſorderly* members convinced them were indiſpenſibly neceſſary. But, I may anſwer further, that we do not apprehend, that all the *lumber* of Preſbyterian acts are exemplified in the firſt Chriſtian churches; *e. g.* The act of the Synod of Relief, for holding communion with *Epiſcopalians* and *Independents*. But, the

queſtion in hand, is miniſters deſerting their charges at pleaſure. And can my opponent prove, from the example of the firſt Chriſtian churches, that after an ordinary teacher was ordained in a particular charge, as their ſtated paſtor, and had promiſed ſubjection to his brethren in the Lord, that he afterwards deſerted it at pleaſure, without regarding any thing like decency or decorum in that well regulated Society?

It is regard to good breeding, and not the importance of theſe queſtions, which has induced me to tranſcribe and anſwer them. There is one thing, however, which I cannot well underſtand, namely, Why our author ſhould alledge that theſe queries will *puzzle* us *more* than we are *aware* of. I make no doubt he was ſenſible enough, that they ſtood much in need of ſomething to give them an air of importance. But I am at a loſs to reconcile this with candour; for I cannot perſuade myſelf that he really imagined, that any man of common ſenſe would find the leaſt difficulty in anſwering them. Nor do I think, after all the noiſe my opponent makes about *decency, decorum, good breeding*, &c. that he has given us any convincing proof of his ſtrict attachment to decorum, in charging *Preſbyterians* in general, and the *Seceſſion* in particular, with what is inſinuated in theſe queries. An inſinuation unfavourable to Mr. B—e, is the *eſſence* of *ill-manners*; but the groſſeſt inſinuations againſt Preſbyterians in general, as acting the ſame part with the church of Rome, is the *height* of *decorum*.

I ſhall obſerve on the whole, concerning theſe queries, that Mr. H———n ſeems to maintain, in another performance, that young men may refuſe to accept of a charge, without giving any ſolid reaſon why; and exclaims againſt us for tyrannizing over our probationers, becauſe, in a certain caſe, an individual made a motion to take a young man's licenſe from him for refuſing to accept of a call, while Mr. H———n himſelf does not alledge, that a *ſingle member* ſeconded the motion; and where then the evidence of tyranny? I ſhould think it poſſible, for a young man to reject a call, in ſuch a manner, as deſerves reprehenſion. Here again our author maintains, that miniſters may deſert their charges, without giving any reaſon at all. This appears to me, to be a ſort of *Preſbyterian Independency*. For, if every miniſter is ſo independent of his brethren, that he may deſert his charge at pleaſure, without acknowledging

them in the leaſt, why may he not act independent of them in other particulars as well as this? The conduct of Meſſrs. Boſton, Baine, *&c.* in particular, is but a trifle in compariſon of defending this as a general rule, and overturning Preſbytery from its foundation.

It is evident likewiſe, that he rejects as *lumber*, the laudible regulations of Preſbyterians in general, and of the church of Scotland in her reforming periods in particular, which appeared to them agreeable unto, and founded upon the word of God; and, it is hoped, the regulations in queſtion will appear ſo to many, till they are convinced that God is the author not of order, but of confuſion in all the churches. It is equally evident, he does not ſubſtitute any other rules in their place, by which the ſynod of Relief propoſe to conduct themſelves, and the people under their charge; the people are juſt to take it for granted that they will conduct them wiſely. To uſe one of our author's own phraſes, it is no great difficulty to trace the analogy between this, and another ſyſtem of principles, little befriended by the word of God.

I would, therefore, tender one advice, to the well-meaning people in the Relief connexion; I am perſuaded there are many ſuch among them, and I am certain I mean them no hurt.—If Mr. H——n expreſſes the ſentiments of your ſpiritual guides, it is certainly reaſonable that you ſhould aſk them, by what rules they intend to conduct themſelves, and govern you? Or, if they mean to demand implicit faith of you; ſince they diſcard, as *lumber*, the regulations of the beſt reformed churches, and ſubſtitute nothing in their room?

It will, perhaps, be anſwered, that they mean to conduct themſelves by the word of God, the unerring rule. But Preſbyterians, Independents, Epiſcopalians, Neonomians, Arminians, Arians, Socinians, will all very readily give the ſame reply. The word of God is certainly an infallible rule; but it is as certain, that the meaning frequently palmed upon it is far otherwiſe. And if Mr. H——n may be credited, his bare aſſertion is frequently a ſufficient proof, that orthodox divines, in general, have quite miſunderſtood the word of God. For reaſons of this ſort, every body of miniſters have generally conſidered it as very reaſonable, to give their people ſome account of their views of the word of God; and in what manner they

mean to conduct themſelves. I know no reaſon why the people in the Relief ſhould be ſingular, in giving up themſelves to a blind credulity. Since their leaders reject the rules of Preſbyterians in general, and of the church of Scotland in particular; it is plain, they have a different view of the word of God, from all who have gone before them; and, what is it? Can their people tell? They, perhaps, imagine, that their miniſters will certainly regard the ſcriptural rules of the church of Scotland; but who can tell what theſe rules are, which they reckon ſcriptural? Whenever they act contrary to any of theſe rules, however agreeable to the word of God, and common ſenſe, as theſe reſpecting miniſters deſerting their charges evidently are, we may expect to hear them reprobated as *unſcriptural lumber*. The reader may judge, if Mr. H——n's doctrine correſponds with chap. xxxi. ſect. 3. of the Weſtminſter Confeſſion, 'It 'belongeth to Synods and Councils to ſet down rules and 'directions, for the better ordering of the public worſhip of 'God, and government of his church: Which decrees and 'determinations, if conſonant to the WORD OF GOD, are to 'be received with reverence and ſubmiſſion; NOT ONLY for 'their agreement with the WORD, BUT ALSO for the POWER 'whereby they are made, as being an ORDINANCE of God, '*appointed thereunto* in his word.' It will be anſwered, they are ſtill to be *conſonant* to the word of God. I reply, We as heartily approve of this as Mr. H——n. But he cuts off all regard to Synods, *As an ordinance of God appointed thereunto in his word*.—But a worſe difficulty ſtill remains. He has no more to do but aſſert, without ſo much as attempting a proof, that this or that has no foundation in the word; and, therefore, his hearers muſt be perpetually in the dark. I leave the reader to judge, if my advice is unſuitable, or if I have given a ſatisfying reply, to his puzzling queries.

In page 8. he proceeds to inſtruct the ſecond branch of his general charge, namely, '*The Synod diſcover much ignorance* '*of Relief principles, although they pretend to confute them.*' This is, perhaps, very true, with reſpect to Relief principles in general; for, who can underſtand them, when they prudently decline to give any judicial account of them, although they well know, that this has been inceſſantly demanded? Mr. H——n gives us ſome account of them; but what cer-

tainty have we, that his brethren agree with him? The proof of this charge, is the following; in a foot note in the Re-exhibition, it is ſaid, 'The popular plea advanced in ſupport of 'ſuch vague and extenſive terms of communion is, that all the 'children of God, have an undoubted right to the children's 'bread.' I aſk, Is there any plea, more popular in the Reliefthan this? I am certain, we are continually dunned with *ſaintſhip*, *real ſaintſhip*, *good men*, *all good men*, *the children*, the *childrens bread*, &c. Nay, Mr. H——n himſelf uſes it in his laſt argument, concerning terms of communion. Is it then a falſhood, that this is a VERY popular plea for theſe terms of communion? I am perſuaded, that the moſt part of his own connections can bear witneſs, on which ſide the falſhood lies; for, as far as I can learn, it is not only a *popular*, but it is the ONLY plea which moſt of them can urge for their terms of communion. It muſt, therefore, be a very judicious and learned proof, that this is a falſhood. It is true, Mr. H—n has now informed us, that it is *viſible* ſaintſhip before the world. But, perhaps, the world's ſaintſhip is a term of communion conſiderably vague ſtill.

He now informs us likewiſe, that their terms of communion are not much different from our own, namely, '*Viſible ſaint-*'*ſhip, conſiſting in a competent knowledge of the truths of reli-*'*gion, as the object of faith, and a good converſation.*' But how unmeaning are theſe phraſes, *competent knowledge*, and *good converſation*, when we compare them with Relief terms of communion? For, it is only ſuch errors, or irregularities, as are inconſiſtent with a ſtate of grace, or which, in the judgment of charity, diveſt the man of viſible ſaintſhip, which, according to their terms, can exclude a man from ſealing ordinances. I ſhall only appeal to all theſe who are acquainted with their hearers, if it is a falſhood, that all the children of God, having an undoubted right to the children's bread, is a very popular plea among them. And Mr. H——n himſelf urges it very ſtrenuouſly.

His third general charge, page 9. is, *ignorance* and *perverting* of ſcripture. This charge is founded on its being aſſerted, in the forementioned foot note, 'That an error in the head, 'with regard to the doctrine, or diſcipline of the church, is 'as really ſcandal in the ſight of God, as an immoral practice;

'and therefore ſufficient to exclude from ſealing ordinances.' In his anſwer to this, he firſt grants, that it is a ſcandal in the ſight of God. And, is it a ſcandal in the ſight of God, and not *as really* a ſcandal as any thing elſe? And, if it is open and avowed; if it is a ſcandal in the *ſight of God*, it certainly ought to be a ſcandal in the *ſight of the church:* And, why then admit to ſealing ordinances, till the ſcandal is purged? Our Author is here profeſſedly refuſing, that errors in the head ought to exclude from ſealing ordinances; he owns, however, they are a ſcandal in the ſight of God; and, if they are avowed, they ought therefore to be a ſcandal in the ſight of the church. I appeal to every man, if he is not pleading for a ſcandalous communion!

But he adds, that although an error in the head is a ſcandal in the ſight of God, '*It is not equally offenſive in his ſight,* '*as an immoral practice.*' But, if it is a ſcandal at all, is it not as *really* one, although not *ſo offenſive?* A ſcandal, and not *as really* a ſcandal, is a paradox; and if really a ſcandal, it is certainly ſufficient to exclude from ſealing ordinances, unleſs we are to admit the ſcandalous. Or, unleſs a thing may be no *ſcandal* in the *eye of the church*, although ſhe know it to be a *ſcandal* in the *ſight of God.*

The reaſon he aſſigns, why it is not ſo offenſive, is, '*A* '*ſpeculative error, is only a ſin of ignorance.*' But, it may be wilful ignorance, deſpiſing means of information; and it will require a proof, that this is not exceedingly offenſive. '*Whereas an immoral practice*, (ſays he), *is a ſin againſt* '*knowledge.*' This would likewiſe require proof. Is it impoſſible for a man to be ignorantly guilty of any failure in his practice? According to our Author's doctrine, ſins of ignorance muſt be confined *entirely* to *ſpeculation.*

It is likewiſe, ſays he, againſt '*conviction of duty*' This is to maintain, that the convictions of ungodly men are every way as extenſive, as the immorality of their lives; yea, as the law of God, with regard to practice. It is alſo againſt '*the* '*very light of nature*,' ſays he. Here he maintains, that the light of nature is as extenſive, as the holy law of God, in its exceeding broad commandment. I am certain, it is new doctrine, that there can be no immorality which the light of nature does not diſcover. If this is the caſe, it follows unde-

niably, that the fall of man has not darkened his underſtanding in the leaſt, with reſpect to his practice. If this is his boaſted orthodoxy, the reader may judge! He adds, it is likewiſe againſt '*the cleareſt precepts of the goſpel.*' I apprehend, he will not maintain, that the goſpel, ſtrickly taken, contains *precepts*. It is a free exhibition of a Saviour to ſinners; *I bring you good tidings*, or the goſpel:—*For, unto you is born —a Saviour*, Luke ii. 10, 11. It is then the goſpel in an extenſive ſenſe, including the diſpenſation of it, which our Author muſt mean. But even in this ſenſe, I might aſk, is it the precepts of the law, in its covenant form, which he ſtiles goſpel precepts? This he will not affirm. It muſt then be the precepts of the law, as a rule of life. I aſk then, are not all the precepts of the law as a rule of life, equally included in the diſpenſation of the goſpel? But, when men ſpeak of *goſpel-precepts*, they ſeem evidently to have a view to *ſome precepts*, in diſtinction *from others*, which muſt be *law-precepts*. If this is not to confound law and goſpel, and exactly ſimilar to the Neonomian ſcheme, the reader may judge. The law of God is perfect, and contains *every precept*, and enjoins *every moral* duty. The goſpel offers a Saviour, with *pardon*, and all neceſſary grace to enable ſinners to obey the law as a rule. Had our Author deſignedly made a trial, how many errors he could crowd in a few words, he could ſcarcely have exceeded what he has done in theſe few lines. He next adduces his own comment on the xivth of the Romans, as a proof that we pervert ſcripture. I hope, a number of my readers at leaſt, are convinced from what I have ſaid on that text *, that this is juſt making his *own* perverſion of ſcripture, a proof that we pervert it.

But to complete this charge, he informs his reader, page 11. that the Burgher Synod, *are ignorant of the original language*. I apprehend, there are numbers of them, no way afraid of a comparative trial with *Him* however. He has already made a bluſter about this in another performance. And leſt the reader ſhould apprehend, that he evidences ſome uncommon acquaintance with the original; I may inform him, that the meaning of the word, on which Mr. H——n founds his charge, is quite

* See above, p. 180,—189.

well underſtood by every ſchool-boy, before he has half learned his grammar. It literally ſignifies *to walk*; and is figuratively uſed in ſcripture: Mr. H——n affirms, that it never reſpects ſentiments, but always the practice. It is generally allowed, that theſe words which are expreſſive of the ſentiments and affections of our minds, were originally expreſſive of external actions; and therefore, I apprehend, the literal meaning of the word can do him very little ſervice, as even his own ſenſe of it is figurative, for literally it does not ſignify *moral*, but *natural* walking. But however this be, I may obſerve, that if it reſpect a *moral*, or *immoral* practice, founded upon, and influenced by *truth* or *error*, it makes very little difference as to the point in hand. Are we to reject the *ſtreams* as *deadly*, but preſerve the *fountain* as *ſalutary?* Are we to avoid the *fruit* as *bad*, but to cultivate the *tree* as *good?* Are we to reprobate the *effect* as *wicked*, but careſs the *cauſe* as *righteous?* This muſt be the caſe, if we reject an *immoral practice*, but embrace the *errors* from which it *proceeds*.

It may perhaps proceed from my ignorance, but the word appears in my view to reſpect *error*, as well as *immorality*; and *truth* as well as a *godly converſation*. It is a ſcripture expreſſion, 1 John i. 7. *If we* WALK *in the light*. Now, to walk in the light, is to maintain the doctrines of the goſpel, as well as a godly converſation. And this is the more evident, as it is oppoſed to the darkneſs of error in the preceding verſe: 3 John 4. *To hear that my children walk in the* TRUTH. To walk in the truth, is to maintain the truths of the goſpel, as well as a converſation becoming them, John viii. 12. *He that followeth me ſhall not walk in darkneſs*. To walk in darkneſs, is to embrace error, as well as to practiſe immorality. Hence, it is ſaid, John xii. 35. *He who walketh in* DARKNESS, *knoweth not whether he goeth*; he is ignorant and bewildered. Again, I might aſk, *Is walking in good works*, Eph. ii. 10. and *walking in the truth*, expreſſions of the very ſame import? No: To walk in good works, evidently reſpects a godly practice; but, to walk in the truth, reſpects the truths of the goſpel, as well as a godly converſation. I am aware, that many of my readers do not underſtand the original: But it is the very ſame word, which Mr. H——n charges us with ignorance of, which is rendered WALK or WALKING, in all theſe texts; and, I leave

the reader to judge for himſelf, if WALKING has no reſpect to doctrinal truths, but only to practice in theſe paſſages; and, if Mr. H——n has any foundation for his noiſy charge of ignorance of the original. As for the meaning of it, in 2 Theſſ. iii. 16. I ſhall only obſerve, as I have done already, that if he had contracted the meaning of every ſcripture text in the ſame manner, we had never ſeen his numerous deductions from the xivth of the Romans. But it ſerved a purpoſe *there* to enlarge, but here to *confine*.

In page 12. he proceeds to his laſt and principal branch of charge, namely, to point out, in the mild and polite language of the day, a decade of *groſs miſrepreſentations*, which the Synod are guilty of. It is very diſagreeable to him; and he is ſorry he has ſuch deciſive evidence; but a regard to truth obliges him. Such introductions generally bewray an inward jealouſy, that the evidence is not very deciſive.

The firſt miſrepreſentation he mentions, is its being aſſerted in the appendix, that the Relief ſcheme ſtands upon the ruins of the grand diſtinguiſhing principles of the reformation. This he affirms is *preſumptuous*, and *contrary to truth*. And, that a ſinner's juſtification, by the merits of Chriſt alone, was one of the principles of the reformation, and is maintained in the Relief. The reader muſt judge for himſelf, if Mr. H——n's doctrine on juſtification, in his Compendious View, is conſiſtent with itſelf, with the word of God, or with the principles of the reformation on that article.

He adds, '*Another grand diſtinguiſhing principle of the Re-*
'*formation, is the right of private judgment in matters of re-*
'*ligion.*' But how does this agree with his aſſerting once and again, that our covenanting reformers were quite ignorant of the right of private judgment; and honeſtly intended to enforce their own ſcheme with all civil pains?

On this particular he likewiſe recriminates, by alledging, that the Seceſſion ſtands upon the ruins of private judgment. And why? '*In their Judicial Teſtimony, they teſtify againſt*
'*all the tolerations, which have taken place in Britain. Were*
'*toleration denied, all the inhabitants of Scotland would be*
'*obliged, by the pains of the ſtate, to attend worſhip in their*
'*reſpective pariſh churches.*' But, I may aſk our Author, if this would inevitably be the caſe, without an *almoſt boundleſs*

toleration? It is a toleration of *this ſort*, which our Teſtimony diſapproves of. Our Author ought to know, that there is ſome difference between NO TOLERATION, and an almoſt BOUNDLESS TOLERATION. I ſhould be glad to be informed, what branch of our ſcheme it is, where he finds this; or who the Seceders are who plead for it. He likewiſe aſſerts, that we owe our *exiſtence*, as *diſſenters*, to *toleration*. Here I beg leave to differ from him; and put him in remembrance, that diſſenters had an *exiſtence* in Scotland, when there was really no toleration, but Prelates to the utmoſt of their power, calling in and employing all the pains of the ſtate to make every one attend on his pariſh church. And, I hope, ſome diſſenters would have an exiſtence ſtill, although the ſame ſcene were reacted. But, in a word, we apprehend, that our *covenants*, their *moral* obligation, together with a *ſtated oppoſition* to a promiſcuous communion, among Preſbyterians, Epiſcopalians, and Independents, are *diſtinguiſhing principles* of the reformation in Scotland. And it is ſubmitted, if we are miſtaken. Or, if it is a groſs miſrepreſentation, that the Relief ſcheme ſtands on the ruins of theſe principles. I apprehend ſtill, that the falſhood is not very groſs.

2. It is another groſs miſrepreſentation, that 'all the abettors of the Relief ſcheme are animated by a ſpirit of uncommon oppoſition to the deſign of the covenants.' He does not poſitively deny this; but evades, by ſuppoſing this or that to be the deſign of them. But it is very plain, if they are of Mr. H——n's ſentiments, and we have little elſe whereby to judge of the Relief ſcheme, they are keen oppoſers of covenanting in general, and our covenants in particular. And as it is from him we are to learn the Relief ſcheme, if they are not of his ſentiments, they are not the abettors of it, altho' they may be in the Relief communion. Why, either Mr. H——n does not underſtand the Relief ſcheme, or oppoſition to covenanting is a very diſtinguiſhing branch of it; and if any of their hearers are not opponents of covenanting, they are not abettors of the Relief ſcheme. Altho' a man is in connection with a ſcheme, if he is diſſatisfied with it, and earneſtly wiſhes it to be new-modelled, he is with no great propriety ſtiled an abettor of that ſcheme. But I need not inſiſt on this, for Mr. H——n at laſt tells us what he is convinced was *really* the deſign of our

covenants, and that it is the duty of every man to oppoſe it; and yet it ſeems it is a groſs miſrepreſentation to ſay, that he is an oppoſer of the deſign of them. It is evident that *uniformity* was one deſign of our covenants, and ſetting every violent meaſure aſide, if a man is not guilty of ſuch error as is inconſiſtent with a gracious ſtate: the Relief ſcheme is directly calculated to prevent uniformity, and encourage the man to continue in his preſent opinions; for his errors are only trifling, leſs important matters; and therefore it is directly oppoſite to the deſigns of our covenants.

But to make this as plain as ſunſhine, I aſk the reader, if he hears ſuch *general* and *keen oppoſition* made to covenanting by any other denomination of profeſſors, whether church or diſſenters, as is made by the Relief? This, I apprehend, is notour to all. It is ſurprizing, therefore, how any man, who has the leaſt regard to *truth* or *candor*, could allow himſelf to ſtile it a groſs miſrepreſentation, that their *oppoſition* is *uncommon*. This, however, is the ſecond groſs falſhood.

3. He tells us it is an excurſion, beyond the limits of truth, when we aſſert, that '*All the abettors of the Relief ſcheme deny* '*the obligation of our covenants.*' But we ſee them reviled from the preſs, we are aſſured the ſame is done from the pulpit, we never find any of their people with whom we converſe, who differ from their leaders. He adds, '*If they had been* '*better acquainted with the ſentiments of Relief connections,* '*they would have been better qualified for telling the truth.*' This *groſs falſhood*, the reader may eaſily perceive, is founded upon our uſing the word ALL. But it is no difficult matter, however, to find ſuch general expreſſions in the word of God, where there might be ſome exceptions, and every individual is not intended, Judges xx. 1. *Then* ALL *the children of Iſrael went out, and the congregation was gathered together as* ONE MAN *from* DAN, *even to* BEERSHEBA, *with the land of* GILEAD. Our author would probably have told the inſpired penman, that if he had been better acquainted with the congregation, he would have been better qualified for telling the *truth*; for we learn afterwards, that none of the inhabitants of Jabeſh-Gilead came up to the congregation. Beſides, we find the apoſtle writing to ſome churches, as if they were ALL ſaints; and to others, as Galatia, as if they had ALL apoſtatized;

whereas it is very likely, there were exceptions in both caſes, and the apoſtle's veracity not the leaſt affected by it; for the word is very frequently uſed to ſignify *only* that a thing is *general*. It very frequently ſignifies *many*, or the *greater part*, Matth. iii. 5. *Then went out unto him Jeruſalem, and* ALL *Judea, and* ALL *the region round about Jordan.*' I apprehend it will readily be granted, that there were more exceptions here, than among Relief connections with reſpect to covenanting. Phil. ii. 21. *For* ALL *ſeek their own, not the things which are Jeſus Chriſt's.*' Was there not a man but the apoſtle, who ſought the things of Chriſt? It were eaſy to multiply inſtances, but it is vain; for only an unknown attachment to a *decalogue of lies*, as in Mr. R——y's caſe, could induce him to mention this as one. The expreſſion bears no more but that it is general; and can he deny it? He tells us, ſome of the Relief connections are not yet quite clear, that theſe covenants were not moral duties. They are no more than abettors of the Relief ſcheme in general; and I am very glad, they are lying open to light: Perhaps they may, in due time, be delivered from halting between two opinions, or between the Relief, and the Seceſſion ſcheme.

4. It is another miſrepreſentation when we aſſert, that the Relief terms of communion will 'admit Proteſtants of every 'denomination.' In anſwer to this, he has ſome puzzling queſtions about the terms of communion eſtabliſhed by the church of Scotland, which I have already conſidered. But he is ſurprized that the Synod ſhould aſſert, that their terms will admit Proteſtants of every denomination; becauſe they will not admit Socinians, Arminians, Antinomians, and Quakers. To this it may be replied, our author may conſider theſe as the different denominations of Proteſtants: but we are juſt as well warranted to conſider Epiſcopalians, Preſbyterians, and Independents, as the general denominations of Proteſtants: And their terms will confeſſedly admit of all theſe.

In a word, our author may diſtinguiſh the denominations of Proteſtants, from their various notions concerning the doctrines of grace; and we are as well warranted to diſtinguiſh them, from their notions about church government: and neither the one nor the other is a falſhood. And he might have been led to conſider this as our meaning, from its being ex-

preſſed in the foot note, *every opinion concerning church government*, which he afterward mentions. But according as he expreſſes their terms of communion himſelf, they admit viſible ſaints *before the world*; and there are, perhaps, ſome among *every denomination* of Proteſtants, whom the world will be as apt to cannonize as viſible ſaints, as either Seceders or Relievers. —All his falſhoods as yet, therefore, amount only to a *ſplenetic quibble*, and ſhew us what manner of ſpirit he is of.

5. It is a fifth miſrepreſentation, when it is aſſerted, in a foot note in the Appendix, that Sect. 2. Chap. xxvi. of the Confeſſion, reſpects only charity to the poor, and other offices of kindneſs; and to make up the deſigned number, it is a ſixth, that this is evident from the ſcriptures annexed. I freely own, that this is not very cautiouſly expreſſed; but it is a *mere inadvertency*. Had it been ſaid, the *laſt branch* of the Section, Mr. H——n has ſaid the very ſame thing: and with reſpect to the former branch of it, I have made it evident, I hope, to the conviction of every unprejudiced perſon, that it makes nothing for the Relief terms of communion. And the compoſers of the note well knowing, that it was only the *laſt article* of the Section, which had the remoteſt appearance of countenancing Relief terms of communion, have juſt inadvertently mentioned the Section, when they ought to have ſaid the *laſt article* of it. And, as it ſuited their purpoſe every way as well, to have ſaid the *laſt branch* of the Section, it is evidently an inadvertency.—I may now aſk the reader, if there is no difference between a *groſs falſhood*, and a *ſimple inadvertency*. And although this had really been deſigned, which it evidently is not, I leave the reader to judge from what I have ſaid on that Section, if the Relief miniſters have not perverted the meaning of it as much, in ſupporting their Synodical deciſion.

7. It is another miſrepreſentation when it is aſſerted, in a foot note likewiſe, that 'they admit to church communion, 'people of every different opinion with reſpect to church go-'vernment, and even thoſe who daily attend upon the miniſtry 'of Intruders.' To the firſt of theſe he anſwers, that '*they* '*will not admit Papiſts*.' I am perſuaded they will not. But the queſtion is, do their terms of communion exclude Papiſts, on account of their notions about church government? I muſt ſay, that as far as I underſtand them, they do not. They

exclude *only* on account of erring in *eſſentials*; and although they do not enumerate eſſentials, as far as any can underſtand from their writings, opinions about church government are none of *their eſſentials*; and therefore they cannot conſiſtently exclude on this account. They can freely admit Epiſcopalians, who maintain an antiſcriptural hierarchy as well as Papiſts. I remember to have read ſomewhere, I think, of two eminent and witty authors in the reign of Queen Anne, the one of whom was an Epiſcopalian, the other ſuppoſed to be ſomething attached to the Catholic faith; that the Epiſcopalian wrote to his friend, urging him to embrace the religion of his country; he returned an anſwer, deſiring the Epiſcopalian to inform him in his next, of the *peculiar advantages* attending a FEMALE, rather than a MALE head of the church; becauſe this appeared to him to be the *principal* difference. This was certainly a ſtretch; but I own, I do not underſtand why we ſhould admit theſe who maintain a *civil*, and exclude theſe who maintain an *eccleſiaſtical* head of the church in Chriſt's room, *merely* on account of their opinions about church government. This does not then appear to be any groſs falſhood; and it would have been a ſtretch of charity, although he had concluded, that we mean Proteſtants of every opinion about church government, as well as every denomination.

8. It is another miſrepreſentation, that they 'admit theſe 'who daily attend on the miniſtry of intruders.' But if this is the caſe, and I would wiſh to credit him: I am certain, he muſt give up with viſible ſaintſhip. For whatever may be their reaſons, it is undeniable, that many ſober people, as viſibly religious in every other reſpect, as either Seceders or Relievers, do attend regularly on the miniſtry of theſe who accepted of their charge without the call of the people. And to cut them off from the number of viſible ſaints, were an intolerable want of charity. He indeed alledges elſewhere, that ſuch will not apply to the Relief. But the oppoſition of the Seceſſion to intruſions, is as well known as that of the Relief; and, I am certain, ſome ſuch have applied to me, whom I could never have refuſed on account of their being deſtitute of viſible ſaintſhip. Mr. H——n has a method, at times, of introducing an anecdote, namely, The fact can be well atteſted, if it is

denied. I ſhall juſt mention an obſervation of an acquaintance: That the Relief admit to communion, (ſaid he), theſe who attend on the miniſtry of intruders, can be atteſted by hundreds of living witneſſes; and it is ſurpriſing, Mr. H——n has the courage to deny it. At the ſame time, I hope, Mr. H—n would not knowingly aſſert a downright falſhood. Perhaps, this may be reconciled, by what Mr. H——n offers in their own defence, namely, That they do not *knowingly admit ſuch*. Their terms of communion are ſuch, that it is highly probable, they cannot be very certain whom they admit. Elder's atteſtations are generally received; and in the Relief, elders who are not in connection with them: And perhaps they cannot be very certain, *how often* elders may atteſt the hearers of intruders. But however this be, as it is fact ſuch have been admitted, as their terms of communion evidently bear it; there can be no miſrepreſentation in the caſe.

It is a 9th miſrepreſentation, when it is aſſerted, in the foot note, that they make a diſtinction 'between *eſſentials* and *circumſtantials*.' This, he affirms, is not only a miſrepreſentation, but an evidence we do not underſtand the ſubject about which we write, nor tell the truth. The reader will allow me to tranſcribe a ſentence from Mr. Baine's *diſcourſes*, page 245. 'The liberty of holding communion with viſible ſaints, or thoſe 'whoſe ſoundneſs in the faith, and holy life, is a ſtrong preſumption that they are the children of God, even though we 'be not of one mind in CIRCUMSTANTIALS, and unimportant 'matters.' Here it is evident, Mr. Baine maintains *circumſtantials*; Mr. H——n maintains, that it is an evidence we underſtand not the ſubject about which we write, when we aſſert it. Who, then, can underſtand their principles? I am certain, we frequently hear of *eſſentials*, *fundamentals*, *circumſtantials*, *unimportant* matters; yea, matters of *leſs*, but of *real* importance. I cannot think, however, that it was *incivility*, or *ill-manners* for us to prefer age, and to conclude, that Mr. Baine was not groſly ignorant of the ſubject about which he wrote. And the more ſo, as *eſſential* and *circumſtantial* is a juſt diviſion; but *eſſential* and matters of *leſs importance* is not. Our Author will not alledge, that *eſſentials* are all of *equal* importance. There may therefore be *leſs* important *eſſentials*; and when theſe are laid in the balance with

uneſſential matters of *real importance*, perhaps the *real important* may preponderate. Be this as it will, *eſſential* and *leſs important* is no juſt diviſion; and certainly it was reaſonable for us to prefer *ſeniority*. If Mr. H——n, therefore, conſult his own credit, he will underſtand his own principles better, before he write of them any more. The reader may very eaſily judge on which ſide this falſhood lies.

It is the 10th and laſt miſrepreſentation, when we aſſert, That the Relief church 'ſeparates the privileges, from the diſ-'cipline of the church.' Or, they admit theſe unto ſealing ordinances, to whom they cannot exerciſe diſcipline. This he tells us, and with a note of *wonder* too, is an unjuſt inſinuation. But let us hear his proof. Why, they exerciſe diſcipline when their own members do not walk according to the rules of the goſpel. Well, I hope they do. But according to their terms of communion, it is only ſuch a walk, as is inconſiſtent with a ſtate of grace, or as diveſts them of viſible ſaintſhip before the world; and perhaps ſome will be in a demur, whether this is the rule for the inſtituted diſcipline of the ſanctuary; *Them that ſin rebuke before all.* And probably ſome will think, that men may ſin, ſo as to deſerve to be rebuked, and not to be diveſted of viſible ſaintſhip. But the queſtion is not concerning their own members, but theſe whom they admit from other ſocieties.

To this he anſwers: '*It is true, indeed, that ſhe admits* '*into her communion, worthy Chriſtians from ſome other deno-*'*minations, upon ſufficient certificates of their moral and reli-*'*gious character, and this has evidently a reſpect to that order* '*and purity of diſcipline, which Chriſt has appointed in his* '*church.*' But with your leave, good Sir, the queſtion is not about a RESPECT to the purity of diſcipline, but the *actual exerciſe* of it. If it were only a RESPECT to admitting them to ſealing ordinances, a RESPECT to the purity of diſcipline would correſpond. But *real admiſſion*, requires the *actual exerciſe* of diſcipline, if they ſhould afterwards expoſe themſelves to it, in order to free you from the charge of ſeparating between the ſeals of God's covenant, and the diſcipline of his houſe. Do none of the Epiſcopalians, Independents, or members of the eſtabliſhed church, whom you admit, ever act ſuch

a part afterwards, as requires diſcipline to be exerciſed? But do you exerciſe diſcipline, or can you exerciſe it? Do you not admit numbers, to whom you very well know you cannot exerciſe diſcipline? And can you inform us, what is even the *evident reſpect* to the purity of diſcipline, when you admit Epiſcopalians? Unleſs you have a line under the Curate's hand, that, if they tranſgreſs, he will exerciſe Preſbyterian diſcipline: Or a line under their own hand, that they will ſubmit to it from you; there is not even the *remoteſt reſpect* to diſcipline in admitting them. Theſe queſtions are very plain; and I have only another to aſk on this particular, Do *they* not deſerve diſcipline, before *they* are admitted to ſealing ordinances, who have the confidence to ſtile this a *falſhood?*

You have now, Sir, furniſhed the Chapel of Eaſe miniſters, with a ſufficient anſwer to your charge of ſeparating between doctrine and diſcipline; for, I ſuppoſe, they can give up their delinquents to the courts with whom they are in connection, and inſiſt for the regular exerciſe of diſcipline, which has a much more *evident reſpect* to the purity of it, than any thing you have advanced in your own defence. I can likewiſe now ſee the reaſon, why you introduce this charge againſt us with a note of ADMIRATION; you know very well, you had little elſe to urge in ſupport of it.

If it is a direct violation of the ſecond commandment, to ſeparate between privileges and diſcipline, with reſpect to communicants in general, as you have aſſerted againſt the Chapel of Eaſe, and I know not how it can be denied; it muſt alſo be a violation of it, to ſeparate betwixt them, with reſpect to a number of theſe who are admitted by us. If this is not the caſe, I aſk, Is it a half, a tenth, or a twentieth part of our communicants, whom we may admit, although we cannot exerciſe diſcipline towards them, without being guilty of violating the ſecond commandment? If admitting the whole in this manner will conſtitute a breach of it, which appears to me undeniable, the admitting of one in this manner muſt do the ſame; numbers may aggravate, but cannot alter the nature of the ſin. If it is diſorderly to admit five hundred, without ſufficient certificates, it is likewiſe diſorderly to admit one in this manner. If it is a ſeparation between privileges and diſcipline, and a violation of the ſecond commandment, to admit commu-

nicants, when we can adminiſter diſcipline to *none* of them, it muſt be the ſame to admit *one* in this manner; or how many may we admit, without ſeparating privileges and diſcipline, and violating the ſecond command? Both of theſe muſt conſtitute the ſame ſin, the one indeed more aggravating than the other. Your terms of communion will admit numbers to whom you cannot exerciſe diſcipline, your practice correſponds, but it is a groſs miſrepreſentation to aſſert it!

Theſe are the ten falſhoods, with which our Author charges us, and he has fortunately hit only upon one *evidently inadvertant* expreſſion in a foot note; none of the reſt have ſo much as the appearance of a *miſtake*. And the reader will certainly allow, that there is an *eſſential* difference between an *incautious expreſſion*, and a groſs *miſrepreſentation* or *falſhood*. We are told, that it is an evidence of a deſperate ſinking cauſe, when it cannot be defended by argument and fair reaſoning. If this is true, every man of diſcernment muſt be convinced, that in Mr. H——n's own apprehenſion, his cauſe is a deſperate ſinking one indeed.

He has now a few Queſtions to put, which are inconteſtible evidences of his ſtrict attachment to civility and good manners; as they are all founded upon theſe *well ſupported* miſrepreſentations. I ſhall tranſcribe the ſubſtance of them ſhortly, and anſwer with equal brevity, as they are of little credit to my opponent, and deſerve very little regard.

Q. 1. 'Is it for telling truth or falſhood, that men are ſtiled '*liars* in ſcripture?' With my Brother's leave, this queſtion is *quite miſtated*; it would be much plainer thus, Does not the ſcripture ſtile that man a liar, who *confidently* charges his neighbour with a number of falſhoods, *merely* for telling the truth?

2. 'What right have the Burghers to forge ſo many groſs 'miſrepreſentations?' I anſwer, Mr. H——n has not proven a ſingle one. And what right has he to call inconteſtible facts, or the moſt *natural deductions* from avowed principles, *groſs miſrepreſentations?*

3. 'What law forbids Relief miniſters to expoſe lies, and 'point out the truth?' I know no ſuch law. But what law authorizes them to call *truth* a *lie*, if it is unfriendly to their darling ſcheme?

4. 'Though they have a right to compoſe a Teſtimony in 'ſupport of truth, from whom do they derive a right to do 'this in ſupport of falſhood?' I anſwer; if it is a branch of our Chriſtian liberty, to compoſe a teſtimony in ſupport of truth, it is a branch of it, which theſe who make the loudeſt clamour about liberty, ſeem not very fond to improve, but chuſe rather to lead on their people in the dark. Mr. H—n's Animadverſions are the ſtrongeſt proof, that our Teſtimony is free of falſhoods; when our keeneſt adverſary cannot inſtruct *one*, but in the way of imitating their example who call truth a lie; and the teſtimony of an adverſary is generally allowed to be ſtrong, when it is favourable.

5. 'Though falſhood may in ſome caſes ſupport the intereſt 'of a party, will it ever ſupport the cauſe of truth?' I anſwer; It never will ſupport the cauſe of truth, nor the real intereſt of any party, if I am not miſtaken: but I cannot refuſe, becauſe it ſeems to be written as with a ſun-beam, that ſome authors apprehend it will ſupport their ſcheme of principles.

6. 'Is not publiſhing falſhood a breach of the ninth com-'mandment?' I anſwer; attempting to ſupport a party-ſcheme, by repreſenting every one as a liar who oppoſes it, and *merely* for telling the truth, is certainly a breach of the ninth commandment; and I wiſh every one whom the garb ſuits, would be ſo candid as put it on.

7. 'Are not thoſe excluded from the ſeals of the covenant, 'who viſibly tranſgreſs the moral law?' I anſwer; according to Seceder terms of communion they certainly are; but according to Relief terms of communion they certainly are not. For, although his charge of falſhoods were as true as it is falſe, it might be only error in the head, a ſin of ignorance: one of his charges is ignorance; and he inveighs very keenly againſt us, for maintaining that ſuch ſins are a ſcandal, and ought to exclude from ſealing ordinances, as well as immoralities in practice. And beſides, the Relief terms of communion, exclude only for theſe breaches of the moral law, whether in principle or practice, which are *inconſiſtent* with a ſtate of grace.

Theſe are his queſtions, which he apprehends we will find ſome difficulty in anſwering, as they are connected with the former part of his pamphlet; but it is this connection which

renders the anſwer eaſy: for the former part of his pamphlet, gives abundant opportunity to return him his own compliment with much greater plainneſs; but it is a nuiſance.

He allows, however, that it is probable the Synod have been miſled, by adopting the ſentiments of ſome particular perſon; in deſcribing whoſe character, he gives an abundant ſpecimen of his civility and good manners. It is evident, he has his neighbouring clergyman in his eye. 'Whoever *he be*, ſays he, 'he was an ignorant blunderer, and ſeems equally deſtitute of 'knowledge and integrity. He diſcovers, indeed, abundance of 'verboſity; but at the ſame time, much poverty of genius, and 'incorrectneſs of ſentiment and idea.' A ſingle inſinuation concerning Mr. Baine, is exceedingly rude; and I have tranſcribed this as a ſpecimen of Mr. H——n's attachment to decorum; and becauſe every man of ſenſe, who underſtands the application of it, will bear witneſs that it is a *groſs miſrepreſentation*. It is not the firſt time, that a man in attempting to draw a diſagreeable portrait of his neighbour, has given a ſtriking picture of himſelf. Nor do I think that this is a picture of Mr. H——n, except when he turns his eye to deteſted Seceders; and then the man who can excel him in the art of blundering, and ill manners, has no poverty of genius in that department of ſcience.

I have only one obſervation further on this, which I am perſuaded has occurred to numbers, in reading Mr. H——n's publications. In another performance he gives us an account of a particular difference between him, and his neighbouring Burgher clergyman; and there is reaſon to think, that he has ſome uneaſy apprehenſion that he is ſomewhat ecclipſed by his neighbour's *verboſity*; it is an eye ſore to him, pride cannot bear it: and accordingly, wherever he can, by any means, get his neighbour dragged in, perſonal pique, and thirſt for revenge are conſpicuous in every ſentence. Is this like forbearance, forgiveneſs, or catholic love? Eminent talents are a bleſſing, but we may ſee they have their prickles of envy, as well as other roſes.

His charging us with numerous lies, may be borne as a groundleſs calumny; but to repreſent a body of miniſters as guilty of numerous falſhoods, *merely* for ſtrict attachment to truth; and then to conclude with a wiſh or prayer, that mi-

niſters may ſpeak the truth; and that theſe who have done otherwiſe, may obtain mercy through a Saviour, is truly ſhocking. It is lamentable to ſee, *miniſters of the goſpel* in the front, and a *prayer* at the concluſion of a performance; ſo unbecoming the ſcholar, or the Chriſtian, to that degree that it is next to impoſſible in anſwering it, to get any thing introduced which hath the leaſt connection with prayer, or the edification of a Chriſtian.—He ought to have uſed this prayer, not at the concluſion, but before he began his performance; and then, if he had been heard, I ſhould never have had his Animadverſions to anſwer.

SECT. IX.

Containing Reaſons, why we do not extend our communion to all theſe among other denominations, whom we judge in charity are acquainted with real godlineſs.

I Have no occaſion to inſiſt on the grounds of our Seceſſion from the eſtabliſhed church, as repreſented in her judicatories, ſince this is done at large in our Teſtimony. I know very well, that it is confidently aſſerted by ſome, that there is no warrant in the word of God for leaving the *eſtabliſhment*. It would be obliging, if they would ſhew us where the word of God fixes any connection between a man's conſcience, and either the *Eſtabliſhment*, on the one hand, or the *Seceſſion* or *Relief* on the other. It is not *names*, or empty ſounds, but *divine truth* which binds the conſcience. What is an eſtabliſhment? The civil government ſecuring a living to a number of miniſters. I am certain this can never have any great influence on conſcience, or lay a man under any obligation to continue in connection with them, if they turn aſide from the divine rule, in doctrine, worſhip, diſcipline, or government. It is an evidence of a very pitiful cauſe, when an *eſtabliſhment*, an empty ſound, muſt ſupport it.

This aſſertion is ſometimes expreſſed in a different manner, namely, That there is no warrant in the word of God, for

leaving the *church of Scotland*, the *mother church*, &c. If by the *church of Scotland* is intended any ſet of men, abſtract from principles, or the church of Scotland not as repreſented in her *ſtandards*, but as repreſented in her *judicatories*; I ſtill deſire information, where there is any paſſage of the word of God, which binds my conſcience to any ſet of men whatever, whether *churchmen* or *diſſenters*. But if the meaning is, *the church of Scotland*, as repreſented in her ſtandards; I freely own, that I know no warrant in the word of God to forſake her. And I leave the reader to judge for himſelf, who they are who have forſaken her. I am certain, that merely retaining the deſignation of the *church of Scotland*, will not decide the queſtion. And the firſt buſineſs of theſe who are ſo confident, that there is no warrant in the word of God for leaving the Church of Scotland, ſhould be a ſolid vindication of themſelves from the charge of having forſaken her, as repreſented in her ſtandards, and doing the very thing they blame.

It is allowed, on all hands, ſo far as I know, that when a church is united, it is a very ſerious and weighty matter, for any number of her members to ſtate a ſeparation; and ought never to be done, but for very *ſolid* and *weighty* reaſons. And the reader may conſider, whether theſe mentioned in our Teſtimony are weighty or not. But after a church has been divided for upwards of half a century, and ſeveral religious denominations of conſiderable extent commenced, the matter is, in my apprehenſion, very different. I come into the world, I ſee ſeveral denominations of profeſſors, ſome are called the *eſtabliſhed church*, others *diſſenters*; but this can lay no obligation on my conſcience, to adhere to one in preference to another, on account of their different deſignations. No; If I act like one privileged with reaſon and divine revelation, I muſt conſider it as my duty to examine matters as impartially as I am able, by the unerring rule; and whatever party I am convinced keeps neareſt to the word of God, there my conſcience binds me to connect myſelf, with an obligation far ſuperior to any empty name, or mere deſignation. It were much to be wiſhed, that young people particularly, would conſider this, when about to fix their religious connection; and not ſuffer themſelves to be impoſed upon by empty ſounds. I

would adviſe my young friends to conſider, that the empty name of *Church*, *Seceſſion*, and *Relief*, &c. cannot bind their conſcience: it is their duty to examine matters by the unerring rule, and whatever denomination they are convinced, in their judgment, comes nigheſt the divine rule, there they ought to fix their connection; diſregarding the vain pretences of any ſet of men, that people are under an antecedent obligation to adhere to them in preference to all others, becauſe they are the eſtabliſhed church. It is readily granted, we ought to do every thing in our power, for healing the breaches of Zion, in a divided and ſhattered ſtate of the church; but trampling on our own judgment and conſcience, is no mean of divine appointment; and we have no right to expect, that God will attend it with his bleſſing. It is likewiſe readily granted, that with whatever denomination we connect ourſelves, we may find ſome things which we could wiſh were otherwiſe; *no perfection here*, as the common ſaying runs. But, if I act a rational part, I am to conſider, where I am likely to find leaſt of this ſort, and there to connect myſelf. I cannot account for the conduct of numbers, who readily acknowledge, that defections or deviations from the divine rule, are far more numerous in the eſtabliſhed church, than in ſome other denominations; yet ſtill they perſiſt in trampling upon, or at leaſt, ſtruggling hard with their own judgment and conſcience, becauſe, ſay they, we muſt not leave the *mother-church*.

I know very well, that there are a number of godly miniſters and chriſtians in the eſtabliſhed church, who will not expreſs themſelves in ſuch an ignorant and confident manner. Some of theſe, it is ſaid, will freely own, that if the judicatories of the eſtabliſhed church were to thruſt them out, as they did the Seceders at firſt, they would act the ſame part which theſe did; ſtate a ſeparation, and aſſociate together by themſelves: but cannot ſee it to be their duty, unleſs they were thruſt out in this manner. I am not very anxious about canvaſſing this ſentiment. However, it ſeems plainly to import, that voluntary ſeparation from a church, be ſhe as corrupt as ſhe will, can never be lawful, or *expedient*, at leaſt, unleſs ſhe thruſt us out from her, by a ſentence of her ſupreme judicatory. Although the judicatories with which we are connected ſhould become as erroneous, or tyrannical, as can well be ſuppoſed; if they

conſider it as a political meaſure, not to paſs any judicial ſentence againſt us, it cannot be our duty, according to this argument, to ſeparate from them.

This would militate very ſtrongly againſt any of the Proteſtant churches at the Reformation, who ſeparated from the church of Rome before they were formally caſt out of her communion, by a ſentence of the Pope, or of his Conclave, as being guilty of unlawful ſeparation. Yea, it ſeems evidently to import, that whatever error, or tyranny, the courts with which we are connected may be juſtly chargeable with; if they do not oblige us formally to adopt their errors, or make us the object of their tyranny in particular, it cannot be our duty to withdraw from them. According to this reaſoning, altho' the church of Scotland ſhould, by a judicial ſentence, caſt out of her communion, the moſt part of the godly miniſters in her connection, it would be the duty of the two or three which were left, ſtill to adhere unto her, and not connect themſelves with their ejected brethren. The reader may judge of this for himſelf.

But what is of much greater conſequence in this matter is, that it is directly oppoſite unto ſeveral expreſs injunctions of the Holy Ghoſt, in the volume of inſpiration, 2 Theſſ. iii. 6. *Now, we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, that ye withdraw yourſelves from every brother that walketh diſſorderly.* Here we are evidently enjoined to withdraw from *every brother* that walketh diſſorderly; and, how much more forcible the obligation lying on us by this divine command, to withdraw from a *church*, when the majority both of her office-bearers and members are become erroneous and diſorderly, in their faith, their worſhip, diſcipline, or government? Perhaps, recourſe may be had to the common ſubterfuge, that the apoſtle is not here ſpeaking of *error*, but of *immorality*. I have conſidered this already; but it is abundantly evident, that there is not the ſmalleſt intimation, that we are not to withdraw from diſorderly brethren, till by a judicial ſentence they caſt us out of their communion.

It is oppoſite alſo unto the divine injunction, 2 John 10, 11. *If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your houſe, neither bid him God ſpeed: For he*

that biddeth him God ſpeed, is partaker of his evil deeds. According to what is here injoined us by the apoſtle, we are not to receive erroneous teachers into our houſes, or bid them God ſpeed; much leſs are we to hold miniſterial and Chriſtian communion and fellowſhip with them; for this is to countenance and bid them God ſpeed with a witneſs. And, if we are not to bid a corrupt church God ſpeed, we are certainly to ſeparate from her, after every ſcriptural and orderly method of reclaiming her has been attempted in vain, whether ſhe caſt us out of her communion or not. And therefore, it does not appear to me at leaſt, that there is any ſcripture warrant for diſapproving of ſeparation, unleſs we are ejected by a judicial ſentence.

I obſerved, in the beginning of this Section, that ſome are very confident, that there is no warrant in the word of God to leave the eſtabliſhment. I may aſk them, Are patronage and legality the doctrines of Chriſt? Are theſe prevailing in the eſtabliſhment? They muſt excuſe me then, for being of opinion, that the apoſtles injunction, not to *receive them into our houſes*, nor *bid them God ſpeed*, who bring not the doctrine of Chriſt, is a warrant clear as ſun-ſhine for leaving the eſtabliſhment. If I am not to receive them into my houſe, I am certainly to have no connection with them, nor ſubmit to them as theſe who are over me in the Lord.

Nor will Mr. H——n aſſert, that this does not reſpect error, but immorality; nay, it is evident, the apoſtle reckons erroneous doctrines among the catalogue of evil deeds. Perhaps, he may alledge, that the apoſtle here ſpeaks of fundamental errors. Be it ſo. But it is very plain from the apoſtle's reaſoning, that be the errors eſſential, or circumſtantial, by our receiving the teachers into our houſe, we become partakers with them. The Relief miniſters ſeem to diſaprove of their people joining with Epiſcopalians, when they diſpenſe the ſacrament; becauſe it would be a joining with them in that which is wrong; but have all freedom to admit godly Epiſcopalians, when the ſacrament is diſpenſed in the Relief; becauſe this is not joining with Epiſcopalians in what is wrong, but Epiſcopalians joining with them. We are of opinion, that not only our joining with others, who maintain errors, either with reſpect to doctrine, worſhip, diſcipline, or government; but, that our al-

lowing ſuch to join with us, is to countenance and encourage; and in the apoſtle's view to be a partaker with them. If receiving them into our houſe, and bidding them God ſpeed, is to be partaker with them; the reader may judge, if admitting them to ſealing ordinances is not as evidently a partaking with them, as receiving them into our houſe.

There are other godly miniſters in the eſtabliſhment, who continue in their preſent connection, becauſe they apprehend they have an opportunity of being more extenſively uſeful in connection with the eſtabliſhment, than in any other ſituation. This is an argument which probably would not be maintained, were it duly conſidered. Separation from the eſtabliſhed church is either unlawful and unwarrantable, or it is not. If it is unwarrantable, then it is certainly their duty to continue in her connection, abſtract from views of more extenſive uſefulneſs. But if it is not unwarrantable, which the argument indeed ſeems tacitly to grant; why, the force of it is juſt this, becauſe the greater part continue in an unwarrantable connection, I muſt do ſo alſo, in order to be extenſively uſeful to them. I apprehend we are to expect real extenſive uſefulneſs by cleaving to the divine rule, through good and bad report. Beſides, where is the more extenſive uſefulneſs? Extenſive uſefulneſs in judicatories of the eſtabliſhed church will not be much inſiſted on; and diſſenters have generally as many under their inſpection to attend upon their ſtated miniſtrations, as they can diſcharge the duties of their office unto, without oppreſſion; and ſeverals of them many more. And in their occaſional miniſtrations, they have generally as extenſive audiences as if they were connected with the eſtabliſhment. The argument from more extenſive uſefulneſs appears to me quite imaginary. I have no inclination, however, to inſiſt on theſe things.

If it is aſked, what are our terms of communion? I anſwer, I uſually hear them expreſſed in this manner: A competent meaſure of knowledge;—a converſation becoming the goſpel;—a regular and ſtedfaſt attachment to the principles of the church of Scotland, in her doctrine, worſhip, diſcipline, and government, contained in the word of God at large, and briefly ſummed up in her excellent ſtandards.—And therefore, altho' there are numbers of miniſters and Chriſtians in the eſtabliſhed church, of the reality of whoſe religion we have not the remoteſt

ſuſpicion, we cannot maintain communion with them, becauſe they do not, in our view, evidence a regular attachment to their *own* principles.

But the buſineſs of this Section is, to ſhew, why *we do not* (as the Relief) extend our communion to the *godly* of every denomination. I know very well, that our principles on terms of communion, are far from being popular; otherwiſe we had not probably met with ſuch furious oppoſition from a certain quarter. I ſhall not multiply particulars, which rather embaraſs the judgment of common readers.

1. I apprehend we have no warrant to admit to ſealing ordinances, theſe who do not *ſubmit to our miniſtry*, or put themſelves *under our inſpection*. It is the expreſs direction of the apoſtle, Acts xx. 28. *Take heed, therefore, to yourſelves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghoſt hath made you overſeers; to feed the church of God which he hath purchaſed with his own blood.* Here the apoſtle very evidently joins *feeding* and *overſight* together. But were we to extend our terms of communion to all whom we can judge in charity are truly godly, I am certain we behoved to extend them unto many, over whom the Holy Ghoſt has *not made* us overſeers. We do not apprhend, that we are made overſeers to any contrary to their own choice, or without their conſent. But are there not many apparently godly in the eſtabliſhed church, who are in no heſitation about the Seceſſion being a ſchiſm, or that we have made an unwarrantable ſeparation: yea, all the godly in the eſtabliſhment declare practically, which is the ſtrongeſt manner of expreſſing it, that we have made an unwarrantable ſeparation; and that they have no freedom to ſubmit to our miniſtry. Can it then be ſaid, with any propriety, that the Holy Ghoſt has made us *their* overſeers? And as to the different denominations of diſſenters, if they could ſubmit to us as their overſeers, why ſhould they continue to differ from, and oppoſe us? And therefore, if we ſhould admit to ſealing ordinances, theſe who are not in connection with us, we behoved to feed many of whom we have no overſight at all, and tranſgreſs the divine direction.

It may, perhaps, be ſaid, that it is the church in general, or the church Catholic which the apoſtle here enjoins them to feed, and that they were overſeers of the Catholic church. But

the ſuppoſition is abſurd; for I know none who pretend to ſuch an extenſive overſight, except that monſter of pride, the Roman Antichriſt. He, indeed, pretends to have the overſight of the church Catholic, and claims to himſelf the title of *univerſal* biſhop or *overſeer;* and in ſo doing aſſumes to himſelf that honor which belongs to Chriſt *alone*, the good ſhepherd and biſhop, or OVERSEER of ſouls. But it is very evidently the Preſbyterial church at Epheſus which is intended; to the ordinary ſtated elders or teachers of which, this exhortation is directed. And we find another apoſtle connecting feeding and overſight together, and applying it particularly to the church which was among them: 1 Pet. v. 2. *Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the overſight thereof.* But, did we extend our communion to all the godly of every denomination, if we did not feed many more to whom we *are not*, than theſe to whom *we are* overſeers, it behoved to be on account of their not demanding it.

It may perhaps be objected, that theſe ſcriptures evidently reſpect feeding them doctrinally; and that if this argument proves any thing, it will prove too much, namely, that miniſters are to feed none doctrinally but theſe of whom they have the overſight, and ſo are to ſhut their church doors againſt all who are not regular members of their own congregations. I anſwer very ſhortly, That it includes feeding doctrinally, I readily grant; yea, that there may even be a particular view to this: but I maintain that it includes likewiſe all the branches of a miniſter's duty unto his people; as a ſhepherd *feeding* his flock to which the alluſion evidently is, in both theſe texts, includes in it the whole duty of a ſhepherd: and accordingly it includes not only feeding them by the preaching of the word, but by the diſpenſing of ſealing ordinances alſo. And it is evidently feeding, *as church members*, which is intended; it is *as the flock of God*, and therefore it evidently bears, that their feeding *as church members* was to correſpond with their overſight, altho' they were not to ſhut the doors of their places of worſhip, to the excluſion of others from hearing the goſpel. And if our *overſight* and *feeding as church members* are connected, and ought to correſpond, which is plainly imported in the words; then our *admitting* to ſealing ordinances, ought not to exceed our *overſight*.

It may alſo be objected, That if miniſters muſt admit none to ſealing ordinances, but theſe of whom they have the overſight; then they muſt confine their communion to their own congregations, and muſt not admit members of neighbouring congregations, although in connection with them; for they have not the overſight of theſe. I anſwer, although it is true, that we have the overſight of our own congregations, in a *particular* manner; yet, in *general*, we have the overſight of all theſe who are in connection with, and profeſs ſubjection unto theſe courts of which we are members. And the exhortation, Acts xx. 28. is directed to the elders of a Preſbyterial church, including theſe of whom they had the overſight.

It may alſo be objected, That if a member from a foreign church, which maintains the ſame principles with ourſelves, ſhould ſojourn with us for a while, although ſufficiently atteſted, we could not admit him to ſealing ordinances, becauſe we have not the overſight of him. I anſwer; if a member from a foreign church give us a ſufficient certificate, we have the overſight of him while he continues among us; and he has a right, at departure, to demand a certificate from us: and if the church to which he belongs maintain the ſame principles with us, he cannot be admitted at his return without it.

It may likewiſe be objected, That theſe texts import only, that a miniſter's ordinary labours are to be dedicated to his own flock; but do not include that he muſt not admit others to ſealing ordinances. I anſwer; this is a mere aſſertion, which has not the leaſt foundation in the words; unleſs admitting to ſealing ordinances, is no branch of feeding *as church members*: or, in other words, unleſs diſpenſing ſealing ordinances is no branch of a miniſter's ordinary labours; and therefore it will not be admitted, till ſome other ſcripture text is adduced, bearing, that miniſters may admit to ſealing ordinances theſe of whom they have not the overſight. And till this is done, I muſt conclude that I ſee no warrant to admit theſe to ſealing ordinances, over whom the Holy Ghoſt has not made us overſeers.

2. I apprehend, that theſe who act ſuch a part, as is truely offenſive to us, and which we are convinced, in our judgment, deſerves reproof; we have no warrant in ſcripture to admit ſuch, till the offence is removed, or the reproof tendered.

Nay, ſuppoſe; that only an acknowledgment of the offence is neceſſary, either *explicit*, or *practical*, by *relinquiſhing* the offenſive and blame-worthy *principle* or *practice*, there is no ſcripture warrant for joining together in ſealing ordinances till this is done. We readily acknowledge, that there are miniſters and Chriſtians in the church of Scotland, numbers of them, of the reality of whoſe religion, we never entertained the remoteſt ſuſpicion, it never entered our minds: But, at the ſame time, not only on account of our having no overſight of them, but likewiſe, becauſe we are convinced, that their continuing in full connection with theſe who preach another goſpel, and with the utmoſt keenneſs, oppoſe the ſcriptural government of the houſe of God, in ſome of its leading branches, is contrary to ſcripture, and truly offenſive to us, we therefore cannot admit them without a practical acknowledgment, by giving up with the offenſive connection. Nay, we cannot admit them, without condemning ourſelves, and practically ſaying, that our Seceſſion is unlawful, founded on that which is not in the leaſt offenſive to us, and does not require ſo much as a practical acknowledgment, in order to admiſſion to ſealing ordinances. If their preſent connection with theſe who approve of robbing the people of their privileges, and who preach another goſpel, is *really* contrary to the word of God; and *truly* offenſive to us, they certainly ought to acknowledge, at leaſt, practically, before we can admit them: But, if it is not, it is plain as broad day, that we ought candidly to acknowledge, that we have erred in maintaining, that to be a juſt ground of ſeparation, which is not ſo much as offenſive in the leaſt, nor requires acknowledgment of any ſort, in order to admiſſion to ſealing ordinances. And as we are convinced, the grounds of our Seceſſion are juſt, we muſt approve of acting conſiſtently.

Perhaps it will be ſaid, Do we reckon that all the godly miniſters and chriſtians, who differ from us, whether in the eſtabliſhment or other denominations, are ſcandalous perſons, who ought to appear before congregations and be rebuked, like theſe who are guilty of groſs immoralities, before they are admitted to ſealing ordinances? I heartily diſapprove of ſuch bitter ſpeeches. But, if we are not juggling with God and man,

in ſtating a Seceſſion, as I hope we are not, but can make the prophet's appeal, *We have not deſired the woful day;* then we muſt conſider their continuing in connection with theſe who had not the call of the people, and who preach another goſpel, as truly *offenſive*, a real offence *given;* and therefore, if we attend to the ſcripture rule, there muſt, at leaſt, be a practical acknowledgment on one ſide, by forſaking what is offenſive, before we can conſiſtently join together in ſealing ordinances, Matth. v. 24. *Leave thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; firſt be reconciled to thy brother*, either by prevailing with him to own and forſake, if he is wrong; or candidly acknowledging and forſaking, if thou art guilty. And if this is neceſſary, in private offences, it muſt be every way as much ſo in theſe which are of a public nature.

But, perhaps, it may ſtill be urged, that this is repreſenting all the godly who differ from us, as ſcandalous perſons; and admiſſion to communion with us as a mighty favour. I ſtill refuſe it. It is the *inconſiſtency* of the thing I plead for. And I do not underſtand how the godly in the eſtabliſhment, or other denominations, can *conſiſtently* admit *us* to their communion, any more than we can admit *them* to ours: And I cannot but approve of what is ſuggeſted by the Author of the Relief ſcheme conſidered, concerning different denominations of Chriſtians, enjoying ſealing ordinances among themſelves. The eſtabliſhed church have thruſt *us out* from their communion; we have ſtated a ſeparation from them: All the different denominations maintain, that a ſeparation from one another is juſt and neceſſary. Now, it appears to me, that either this is juggling with God, men, and our own conſcience; or, that our joining in ſealing ordinances is contrary to the divine direction. One of theſe two conſequences ſeem inevitable. 1. That it is lawful, yea, neceſſary, to ſtate a ſeparation on account of ſuch things as are not in the leaſt offenſive to us, and which do not require ſo much as a practical acknowledgment, in order to admiſſion to ſealing ordinances, whereas it appears to me, that a ſeparation ought never to be ſtated, but for weighty reaſons. Or, 2. If this is not the caſe, if lawful ſeparation plainly implies, that ſuch things are offenſive, and require a practical acknowledgment, it muſt follow, that if we join together in full communion, we do ſo

in direct contradiction to the divine rule, *First be reconciled to thy brother*. And therefore Christians maintaining, that separation is just and necessary, must either be gross dissimulation; or their joining in sealing ordinances inconsistent with the divine rule. And if this is the case among different denominations of Presbyterians, it must be still more so with Episcopalians, and Independents; who to the other grounds of separation, add gross and dangerous errors concerning the government and discipline of the house of God.

On this particular, I freely acknowledge, that I do not understand the Relief terms of communion. Mr. H——n seems to consider *connection* with these whom he stiles *legal preachers*, and *intruders*, as so contrary to the word of God, that it is better to state a *partial separation* at least, than be chargeable with it. He freely admits to full communion however, or at least, is willing to do so, if they ask it, these who continue in that very *connection*, which he considers as *so criminal*, as to render his separation *just* and *necessary*. But nothing, I apprehend, can be a just ground even of a *partial separation*, which is not in the least offensive, nor does not require *so much as* a practical acknowledgment.

Continuing in full connection with these who preach other doctrines, or have accepted of a charge without the call of the people, is either offensive unto him, and renders a practical acknowledgment necessary; and if so, why does he admit without it? Or otherwise, it is not in the least offensive to him, and does not render acknowledgment of any sort necessary; and, why then has he stated a separation at all?

But, perhaps, Mr. H——n may alledge, as he seems to insinuate, that the reason why they have stated some sort of separation is this; that the godly ministers in the establishment have it not in their power, to relieve congregations from the oppression of intruders. But, why have they it not in their power to relieve them? Is it not on account of the connection of which I speak, with these who oppose them in this, as well as other particulars? The question then still returns, Is their putting it out of their power to relieve oppressed congregations, offensive to him, or not? If it is, why admit without acknowledgment? If it is not, why state a separation on account

of it? Perhaps my opponent may have various objections to this argument; none occur to me, unleſs it ſhould be alledged, that it cuts off *mutual forbearance* from being a Chriſtian duty. I anſwer; There is room enough for all that *forbearance* which the ſcripture allows; before matters come that length to render ſeparation juſt and neceſſary. Beſides, if a thing ought to be a matter of forbearance with reſpect to *ſealing ordinances*, why ſhould it not be a matter of forbearance with reſpect to *ſeparation* alſo. I know no warrant from the word to maintain, that this or that is a juſt ground of ſeparation; but no ground of excluding from ſealing ordinances. That Chriſtian forbearance ought to be exerciſed in matters of *indifference*, or *doubtful diſputation*, I readily grant: But when ſeparation comes to be lawful and neceſſary; I know no ſcripture warrant for forbearance, and joining together in ſealing ordinances.

3. I may obſerve, as corroborating unto the former argument, that it is the exhortation of the Spirit of God by the apoſtle, 1 Theſſ. v. 22. *Abſtain from all appearance of evil.* Perhaps it will be ſaid, that the text reſpects *only* evils in the practice, as this is the common ſubterfuge, or mantle to cover the guilty head of error. It is evident however, that the apoſtle is ſpeaking of *prophecying* in the 20th verſe, which evidently reſpects *doctrines*. He exhorts them, ver. 21. to *prove all things*; to prove all the doctrines delivered unto them, and not receive them in an implicit way. And then, ſays he, *Hold faſt that which is good*; theſe doctrines which are good, being agreeable to and founded upon the word of God. And then the evil, from the very appearance of which they were to abſtain, is ſet in oppoſition to the good doctrines which they were to hold faſt. So that, although it ſhould be allowed to include evils in the practice, it ſeems evidently, at firſt inſtance, to reſpect the evil of *erroneous* doctrines. It is true, ſanctification is mentioned in the ſubſequent verſe. But ſanctification reſpects the judgment, with reſpect to doctrines, as well as the life, with reſpect to moral duties. I apprehend, that none who maintain the doctrines of free grace, will refuſe, that the whole man, the judgment as well as the affections, is the ſubject of ſanctification; and this evidenced in principle as well as in practice. If this is not the caſe, the underſtanding is not

darkened and defiled by man's natural apoſtacy, nor under the influence of ſanctifying grace. And the apoſtle prays immediately after, that they might be ſanctified wholly. Perhaps Mr. H——n may alledge, that I am ignorant of the original, and that the word is uniformly uſed to ſignify *immorality* in the the practice. But I anſwer; That he will perhaps find it difficult to prove, that the word primarily ſignifies either *error* or *immorality*; but *labour*, *toil*, &c. and perhaps the firſt figurative meaning of it, *miſery* or *wretchedneſs*. Nor can he prove, that it is uniformly uſed in any one *particular* ſenſe whatever. It ſometimes ſignifies the groſſeſt immoralities; but it is likewiſe put for *Satan*, evil *ſpirits* in general, an evil *world*, and a variety of other ſenſes. But that it ſometimes ſignifies *erroneous doctrines*, I ſhall only mention one paſſage, Matth. vii. 17. *But a corrupt tree bringeth forth* EVIL *fruit*. Here it is well known, that by the fruits of falſe prophets, the ableſt divines underſtand their doctrines, as well as their practice; and from its connection in 1 Theſſ. v. 22. the paſſage under conſideration, it ſeems evidently to include *errors*, as well as *immoralities*. Perhaps it may be ſaid, that there is no connection in the paſſage; that in the text and preceding context the apoſtle tenders a number of ſhort, comprehenſive directions, without any connection with, or dependence upon one another. But this is only aſſertion; for the *evil*, from the appearance of which they were to abſtain, is evidently ſet in oppoſition unto the *good* which they were to hold faſt, and both connected with propheſying, in the 20th verſe.

Now, intruſions, legal doctrines, wreſting the privileges of Chriſtians from them, are very grievous evils: and has it not a very ſtrong appearance of evil then, to continue in full connection with theſe who *approve* of, and to the utmoſt of their power, *defend* ſuch evils? I might add, that aſſerting, that the *appropriation* of faith, acts of *truſting*, *relying*, &c. is the moſt *ſerious*, but the moſt *certain* way to eternal ruin, is an evil of a very dangerous nature; and this text affords a clear warrant from the word of God, to reject ſuch as our ſpiritual guides.

But to return to my opponent; he ſeems to allow, that continuing in full connection with theſe who preach another goſpel, is ſuch an evil, that it is more eligible to ſtate ſome

ſort of ſeparation than to be chargable with it: and to admit theſe to full communion who continue in, and defend ſuch a connection, has a very ſtrong appearance of it. It is certainly evil to encourage our brother in any thing which we are convinced is wrong; but freely to admit him to full communion, while he is maintaining a connection which we are convinced is ſo unwarrantable, that it is better to ſeparate than be chargable with it, is certainly encouraging him to perſevere. In a word, it is certainly evil, to ſay one thing by our profeſſed principles, and another in our practice: but all the different denominations ſay by their principles, that they cannot join together; but if they are all to admit one another to ſealing ordinances, they ſay the very reverſe in their practice; and this is not only the *appearance*, but the *reality* of juggling with God and men.

4. To admit to ſealing ordinances, theſe who are not in connection with us, is evidently to ſeparate between ſealing ornances, and the *diſcipline* of the houſe of God. There is no warrant in ſcripture for ſuch a practice, as the word of God cloſely connects theſe two together. They are ſo inſeparably connected, that the ſame word includes both. Acts xx. 28. 1 Pet. i. 2. where the word rendered FEED, includes the whole duty of a ſhepherd, both to *feed* and to *govern*. And though this were not the caſe, *feeding* and *overſight* being joined, in both theſe texts, includes both privileges and diſcipline, and ſhows that they ought not to be ſeparated. And our Saviour's addreſs to Peter, Matth. xvi. 19. *I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven*, has always, as far as I know, been conſidered by Preſbyterians, as including both doctrine and diſcipline, the whole branches of the miniſterial office; and what God has joined together, we have no right to put aſunder. Nor does Mr. H——n alledge that theſe ought to be ſeparated. Nay, he charges the friends and ſupporters of the Chapel of Eaſe with a direct violation of the ſecond commandment, in not keeping God's ordinances entire, becauſe they ſeparate between doctrine and diſcipline; and how they will anſwer the charge is more than I can conceive. Nor do I underſtand how Mr. H——n can free himſelf from being chargable with this in part; in a conſiſtency with his terms of communion, nor any others who admit theſe to ſealing ordinances, who are not in connection with them.

Were we to admit to ſealing ordinances ſuch as are not in connection with us, I am certain they behoved to walk much more circumſpectly than ſome of our own connections, if none of them ſhould afterwards act ſuch a part as requires diſcipline to be exerciſed. But ſhould we attempt to exerciſe it, they would ſoon tell us very roundly, that they had no connection *with us*, and that we had no charge *of them*. And thus we behoved evidently to ſeparate between diſcipline and other privileges. Nay, although none of them ſhould ever act ſuch a part, as requires the exerciſe of diſcipline, we ſeparate between diſcipline and other privileges, as we cannot exerciſe it, whether their carriage requires it or not.

It will perhaps be ſaid, that theſe with whom they are connected will exerciſe diſcipline, if their conduct requires it. No thanks to us; we cannot oblige theſe with whom they are connected to exerciſe it, if they are negligent; nor can we exerciſe it ourſelves, and conſequently on our part we ſeparate between diſcipline and other privileges. Mr. H——n aſſures us, that there are ſome who proſtitute the cenſures of the church, by a profane ſale of them. Mr. Baine informs us, That diſcipline is ſadly neglected, and pure and undefiled religion declines apace, and vice rides triumphant. Will theſe exerciſe diſcipline? No; it is not to be expected.

But it will perhaps be objected, that this is the caſe only with intruders, and legal preachers, and theſe who attend on their miniſtrations; and the Relief church will not admit ſuch to her communion. But if this is ſo, they muſt certainly give up with *viſible ſaintſhip* as the only term of admiſſion. I am well informed, that my neighbouring miniſter, accepted of his charge without the voice of the majority of the pariſh: but what unreaſonable bigotry would it be, *merely* on this account, to ſtrike him off from the number of viſible ſaints? Nor have I any occaſion to go out of the village where I reſide, to find a number of ſober well diſpoſed perſons, who regularly attend upon his miniſtrations; and the viſibility of their ſaintſhip perhaps as evident, as either Mr. H——n's or mine. And I make no doubt, but it is the caſe in other corners likewiſe. Mr. H——n muſt either exclude them without exception, from the number of viſible ſaints, or give up with viſible ſaintſhip as the only term of communion. I pretend not to account

for it, and diſapprove it as much as any in the Relief: but ſo it is, that it is an undeniable fact, that many, either on account of ſome unreaſonable prejudice at diſſenters, or an inexplicable attachment to an eſtabliſhment, do attend on the miniſtry of theſe who entered not by the door; while their Chriſtian carriage and deportment in every other reſpect is ſuch, that to exclude them from the number of viſible ſaints, were the moſt deteſted bigotry. But according to Relief terms of communion, every ſoul of them muſt be excluded as deſtitute of a Chriſtian character. This is nothing but bigotry and party fury; although it ſhould be covered with the prophet's mantle of Catholic love, or zeal for Chriſtian liberty. To refuſe admiſſion, becauſe they are not under our inſpection, or becauſe they maintain ſuch opinions as we are convinced are a juſt ground of ſeparation; or becauſe we cannot exerciſe diſcipline, ſhould their carriage require it, is ſcriptural: but to exclude them as deſtitute of viſible ſaintſhip, is inconſiſtent with the very appearance of charity, which *thinketh no evil.*

Beſides, will Mr. H——n affirm, that all theſe miniſters who had a goſpel call, and who preach the doctrines of free grace, are alſo regular in the exerciſe of diſcipline? I know very well that ſome of them are, but it is as certain that others of them are not. Nor will it be alledged, that the godly Epiſcopalians, who are admitted by Relief miniſters, will have diſcipline regularly exerciſed, ſhould their carriage require it.—They admit then to ſealing ordinances, theſe to whom they cannot exerciſe diſcipline, and whom they have no reaſon in the world to think will ever have it adminiſtred; and conſequently are chargable with that very violation of the ſecond commandment, with which my opponent charges the Chapel of Eaſe. We cannot therefore ſee ourſelves authorized to admit to ſealing ordinances, theſe to whom we cannot exerciſe diſcipline, ſhould their conduct require it, and ſo ſeparate what God has connected in his word. And it is only theſe who are in connection with us, to whom we can exerciſe it.

Perhaps it may here be objected, that according to this reaſoning, we muſt admit only our own congregations, for we cannot exerciſe diſcipline to the members of other congregations, although they are in connection with us. I anſwer; as we are members of theſe courts to whom they are in ſubjection,

we certainly can; and ſhould an inferior court be negligent, we can bring them before their ſuperiors, and have diſcipline exerciſed.

It may likewiſe be objected, that there are particular congregations in the eſtabliſhment, where diſcipline is faithfully exerciſed, and that this reaſon does not apply to the members of ſuch congregations. I anſwer; It is true there are ſuch, but it is equally true, that all the branches of diſcipline cannot be exerciſed by a Seſſion; nay, the weightieſt branches of it cannot; and therefore we have no certainty that even the members of theſe congregations will have diſcipline regularly exerciſed.

I might likewiſe here obſerve, that as it is contrary to the word of God, to admit to ſealing ordinances theſe over whom we cannot exerciſe diſcipline; it is alſo contrary to all good order in *civil ſociety*. Will any well regulated civil ſociety, admit perſons to their moſt valuable privileges, who will notbe ſubject to their regulations, however agreeable to reaſon, and conducive to the welfare of ſociety? Why ſhould they have regulations, if they were to admit perſons to all their privileges without requiring them to be ſubject to them? They would probably think it very inconcluſive reaſoning to argue thus, He is an *honeſt man*; and therefore we muſt admit him to all our privileges, although he ſhould not only refuſe to be ſubject to our rules founded on common ſenſe and reaſon; but even although he ſhould maintain a ſtated oppoſition to them, and do what lies in his power to overturn them. So ſay the Relief, he is a *viſible ſaint*; and therefore we muſt admit him, although he ſhould not only refuſe to ſubmit to our diſcipline founded upon the word of God; but even although he ſhould maintain a ſtated oppoſition to it, and do what lies in his power to overturn it, by maintaining Prelacy or Independency. The word of God ſeems evidently to dictate with reference to the church, and common ſenſe with reſpect to civil ſociety, that diſcipline and other privileges ought not to be ſeparated. But this irregularity we behoved to be chargable with, ſhould we admit theſe to ſealing ordinances, who are not in connection with us. And perhaps it may be as puzzling a queſtion as *ſome others*, Who authorized you to admit theſe to ſealing ordinances, who accord-

ing to your own profeſſed principles, maintain ſuch things as are a juſt ground of ſeparation; and therefore an acknowledgment certainly requiſite before you admitted them; and whom you very well knew, you could take no cognizance of at all afterwards, however ſoon their practice ſhould require it; and ſo violate the ſecond commandment of the holy law, by ſeparating theſe things which God has there inſeparably connected?

It is for theſe and the like reaſons, and not from any diſreſpect to the godly of other denominations, that we cannot extend our communion to many, of the reality of whoſe religion we never entertained a ſuſpicion. Nor do I mean to maintain, as ſome have done, 'that they are all yet in their ſins, and have 'no part in the Redeemer's ſacrifice,' whoſe views are different from mine in this matter. I am intimately acquainted with ſome, whoſe views are different from mine in this particular, who appear to me eminently religious; if I know any ſuch, although for the reaſons now mentioned, I cannot help differing from them.

1. We cannot ſee ourſelves warranted from the word of God, to *feed* theſe by admiſſion to ſealing ordinances, over whom the Holy Ghoſt has not made us overſeers.

2. To maintain, that theſe things may be juſt grounds of *ſeparation*, which are not juſt grounds of *excluding* from ſealing ordinances, appears to us quite abſurd. On the contrary, many things may be a juſt cauſe of excluding from ſealing ordinances, which are not a juſt cauſe of ſeparation: But no defections can be ſo weighty as to be a juſt foundation for ſeparation; but they muſt be a juſt foundation for excluding from ſealing ordinances.

3. We cannot perſuade ourſelves, that admitting theſe to ſealing ordinances, who maintain ſuch things as we are convinced render ſeparation lawful and neceſſary, is conſiſtent with the divine direction, to abſtain from *all appearance* of evil, and not to be partakers of other men's ſins; or remembring, that a little leaven, may ſoon leaven the whole lump.

4. Nor can we ſee ourſelves warranted to ſeparate between the *diſcipline*, and other *privileges* of God's houſe; and to violate the ſecond command by not keeping his ordinances entire, and to make God the Author, not of order, but of confuſion in all the churches.——It is for ſuch reaſons as theſe,

and not from any diſreſpect to the godly of other denominations, that we cannot extend our communion to them.

But perhaps it will be objected, after all, you may be miſtaken in theſe particulars. Why, it is poſſible we may. But, becauſe we are fallible, muſt we therefore proſtitute judgment and conſcience, and become downright ſceptics, doubting of every thing; and diſpenſe with acting agreeably to our light, becauſe there is a poſſibility we may be miſtaken in it?

It is not ſeparate communion, however, but bitterneſs of ſpirit, in pulpit, preſs, and converſation, againſt all who differ from us, which worms out the life of Chriſtian love. Had my opponent refrained from ſuch indecent bitterneſs, and ſelf-confidence, his publications had been much more reſpectable; nor would he have extorted ſo much of this ſort from others, quite contrary to their inclination.

Should I pretend, as he does, that my performance will carry all before it, and the Relief ſcheme ſadly feel the effects of it; I ſhould certainly be guilty of the *eleventh* miſrepreſentation. I freely own, I do not entertain very ſanguine expectations of that ſort. Though it is true, I expect the Relief ſcheme will feel the effects of it, juſt as much as the Seceſſion has felt the effects of his. But if it is a mean of information to any, concerning the doctrines of the goſpel, in oppoſition to Baxterian and Neonomian ſchemes; of convincing ſome, and eſtabliſhing others in the preſent truth, I ſhall think my labour well beſtowed. And as harmony, connected with truth, will never be prejudicial to the liberty of Chriſtians, I am perſuaded, that all my connections will readily join with me in their cordial wiſh, that all theſe who love our Lord Jeſus in ſincerity, may be brought to ſee eye to eye in the light of the divine word. And likewiſe, that if God ſhould ſee meet, in his infinite wiſdom, to deny the precious bleſſing, and Zion's breaches become ſtill wider; that they may be enabled to keep their ſtaff to their journey's end, *contending earneſtly for the faith which was once delivered unto the ſaints*, to whatever obloquy they ſhould be expoſed to for cleaving unto the truth.

THE END.

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